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THE LIFE  
OF  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BY  
JEREMIAH CHAPLIN  
AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF HENRY DUNSTER, FIRST  
PRESIDENT OF HARVARD COLLEGE," "LIFE  
OF CHARLES SUMNER," AND  
OTHER WORKS.

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# LIFE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Franklin's Ancestry. — His Father. — Population of Massachusetts. — Boston in 1680. — Franklin's Home. — His Father's Second Marriage. — Peter Folger. — His Mother.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN came of a race of blacksmiths, who, in the town of Ecton, England, during three centuries, practiced their manly trade. Doubtless his intensely practical turn of mind was largely inherited from his ancestors. In his character, the imaginative and poetical had but little play, far less than with that truly typical American, Abraham Lincoln; but his strong and brilliant common sense amounted almost to genius. "He had," says an eminent writer, "an intellect of a very high order, — inventive, capacious, many-sided, retentive," and "was a man of the most uncommon common sense." Lord Brougham calls him "one of the most remarkable men of our times as a politician, or of any age as a philosopher."

His father, Josiah Franklin, was born in England, in the year 1655, during the reign of Charles the Second. He abandoned the ancestral forge for a dyer's trade, which, again, after his emigration to Boston, he exchanged for that of tallow-chandler and soap-boiler. In his old home he had espoused the cause of the Puritans, and in 1682, the very year of William Penn's arrival in Pennsylvania, he emigrated to the New World, at the age of twenty-seven, with his wife and three small children, that he might enjoy freedom of conscience.

The two colonies of Massachusetts and Plymouth had at that time a population of about fifty thousand. Boston was a small town of five or six thousand inhabitants, and the very next year after Josiah Franklin's arrival, the richest part of it was destroyed by fire. Fifteen years later it had over one thousand houses, and in eight years more its population had grown to eight or ten thousand. John Dunstan, who visited the place in 1680, says that "the houses were for the most part raised on the sea-banks, and wharfed out with great industry and cost, many of them standing upon piles, close together, on each side of the street, as in London, and furnished with many fair shops. . . The south side of the town is adorned with gardens and orchards. . . There is a small but pleasant Common, where the gallants, a little before sunset, walk with their marmalot madams, till the nine o'clock bell rings them home."

Governor Bradstreet, "an old man, quiet and grave, dressed in black silk, but not sumptuously, dwelt in a common house." There were then three churches, where the people were treated to prayers two hours, and sermons an hour and a half long. The stern morality of the times had its comical side, for scolds were gagged, and set in their own door-ways, for hours together, for all passers-by to gaze at. The town had three free schools, but Harvard College, a few miles off, had but ten students, and they were "great smokers." In the year of Mr. Franklin's landing, Cotton Mather was a young man of nineteen, just rising into fame; and John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, at the age of seventy-eight, was within eight years of his final reward.

In the year 1691, as the town records inform us, Mr. Franklin was authorized to erect a shop eight feet square, in which to carry on his business, and a Blue Ball, hung over the door, told the people where to buy soap and candles. If he did not become rich, he must have enjoyed at least moderate success, as he was able to bring up plainly but comfortably, a very large family.

"This worthy man had," says his son Benjamin, "an excellent constitution of body, was of middle stature, but well set, and very strong; he was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skilled a little in music, and had a clear, pleasing voice, so that when he played psalm tunes on his violin, and sung withal, as he sometimes did in an evening, after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable

to hear. He had a mechanical genius, too, and on occasion, was very handy in the use of other tradesmen's tools; but his great excellence lay in a sound understanding, and solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and publick affairs. In the latter, indeed, he was never employed, the numerous family he had to educate, and the straitness of his circumstances, keeping him close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading people, who consulted him for his opinion in affairs of the town or of the church he belonged to, and showed a good deal of respect for his judgment and advice; he was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs, when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbor to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just and prudent in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals or the table, whether it was well or ill dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavor, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind, so that I was brought up in such perfect inattention to those matters, as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me, and so unobservant of it, that to this day if I am asked I can scarcely tell, a few hours after dinner, what I dined upon."

In the year 1689, the wife, whom thirteen years before, when he was about twenty-one years of age, Josiah Franklin had married in England, and who had borne him seven children, was taken to rest. His second wife, the mother of

Benjamin, and of nine other children, was Abia Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, of Nantucket, "a godly and learned Englishman." Mr. Folger deserves most honorable mention as an intelligent and fearless champion of the rights of conscience.

Writing of his mother, Franklin says: "She had an excellent constitution. . . I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness but that of which they died, he at 89, and she at 85 years of age. They lived lovingly together in wedlock fifty-five years: . . he was a pious and prudent man; she, a discreet and virtuous woman. They lie buried together in Boston."

Parton says, "It is probable that Benjamin Franklin derived from his mother the fashion of his body and the cast of his countenance. There are lineal descendants of Peter Folger who strikingly resemble Franklin in these particulars."

The second wife was the mother of ten children, six of whom were sons. Jane, the youngest child, six years younger than Benjamin, was his favorite sister.

## CHAPTER II.

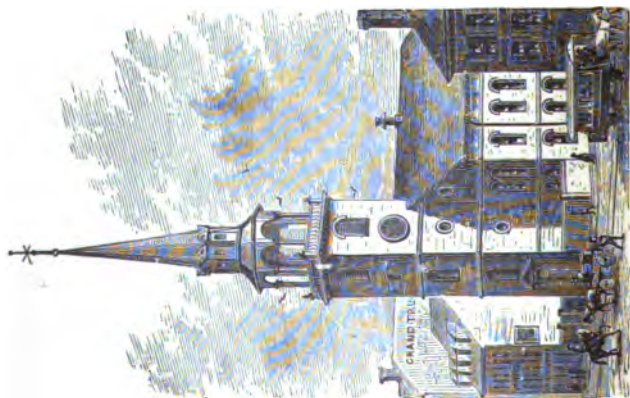
*Franklin's Birth. — Dr. Willard. — Uncle Benjamin. — His Father's House. — Family Scene. — Population of Massachusetts and of Boston. — Commerce of Boston. — Its Social Character. — Madame Knight. — Franklin in his Boyhood. — "Paying too much for the Whistle." — Sent to Grammar School. — Changes his School. — Taken from School. — In his Father's Shop. — Building a Wharf. — Gets into Trouble. — Fond of Swimming. — Learning to Swim. — Swimming with a Kite. — Sleeping on the water in 1785.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was born in Boston, January 17, 1706, in the fourth year of Queen Anne. It was yet seventy years to the Declaration of Independence.

Franklin's birth occurred on Sunday. That very day the new-born babe was taken across the street to the Old South Church, to be baptized. Dr. Samuel Willard, a man of learning, author of the first system of Divinity published in America, and a zealous controversialist, was then pastor of the church. Benjamin was the tenth son and the fifteenth child. He was named







OLD SOUTH CHURCH.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S BIRTHPLACE.—P. 19

from his uncle Benjamin, who, in 1715, came to America, and died in Boston in 1728, at an advanced age. "There was," says Franklin, "a particular affection between him and my father." He was very pious, a lover of good books, and something of a poet. He was much pleased that his brother Josiah had named one of his sons after him, and ever took a deep interest in the boy.

After he came to Boston, now bereft of his wife and all of his ten children but one, he lived four years in his brother's house, a beloved and honored guest, only leaving it when his son Samuel became a housekeeper.

At the time Franklin was born, his father lived in a plain, two-story wooden house, in Milk Street, near Washington, where it stood till 1810, when it was destroyed by fire. It was twenty feet on the front, the sides and a lean-to for a kitchen running back about thirty feet. It had a gable roof toward the street, and the second story and attic projected somewhat over the first story. The whole building contained four rooms, one on the ground floor, comprising parlor, sitting-room, and eating-room, one in the second story, one in the attic, and the kitchen. The building was covered with rude clap-boards on the front, and shingles on the sides and rear. It seems difficult to understand how two rooms, each twenty feet square, and an attic chamber, could accommodate a family of fifteen or sixteen; but, straitened as they must have been for room, a

place was found for one more, when good Uncle Benjamin, in his loneliness, sought his brother's hospitality. "It was, indeed, a lowly dwelling," wrote Franklin's youngest sister, "we were brought up in, but we were fed plentifully, made comfortable with fire and clothing, had seldom any contention among us, but all was harmony, especially between the heads, and they were universally respected, and the most of the family in good reputation." A pleasant picture truly it must have been, when, as Franklin tells us, "thirteen were sitting at one time at his father's table," while the fire roared in the great open fire-place, and cheerful and instructive conversation was carried on between the parents and their boys and girls. No wonder a sensible neighbor liked occasionally to share the "feast of reason" at Josiah Franklin's, soap-boiler and candle-maker. Here was, in fact, a rude college, presided over by a man of rare wisdom, and which sent out at least one famous graduate, "the largest mind that has shone this side the sea."

By this time the population of the two colonies had increased to between seventy and eighty thousand; that of Boston to ten or twelve thousand, which was nearly equal to the whole population of New York and Liverpool at that time. Three or four hundred sail were sent out to foreign ports. "The conversation in this town," says Neal, speaking of this period, "is as polite as in most of the cities and towns of Eng-

land, . . so that a gentleman from London would almost think himself at home at Boston, when he observes the number of people, their houses, their furniture, their tables, their dress and conversation, which perhaps is as splendid and showy as that of the most considerable tradesman in London." It is still more to its credit, that, in such society, the hard-working tallow-chandler was a man of mark. Labor was honorable, especially when, as with Josiah Franklin, it was combined with solid sense and sound principle.

Franklin was born near what was then the extreme southern limit of the town. Beyond were fields and pastures and forests, where the boys roamed and picked berries, or set their traps for squirrels and rabbits, and where, not more than two miles out, the men hunted bears. The town extended back but a little way from the shore, and over a large territory now covered with a busy population, the sea still rolled its waves. Communication with other towns and other colonies was slow and difficult. There is extant a journal of Madame Knight, a great lady in her day, "of good wit and pleasant humor," who taught Franklin to write, in which she gives a lively account of a journey she made on business in 1704, from Boston to New York, two hundred and seventy-one miles. She went on horseback, and was a fortnight on her way, meeting here and there a settlement, but traveling for the most part through the ancient forests, by

a bridle-path, crossing rivers by fords or ferries, encountering swamps and Indians, entertained now by the Governor of Connecticut, and now by the humble pioneers of the wilderness.

When Benjamin was seven years old, an incident occurred, which seems to have made a deep impression upon his mind, as he thus referred to it sixty-six years after, in a letter to a French lady:—

“When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on a holiday, filled my pockets with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and being charmed with the sound of a whistle, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle, but disturbing all the family. My brothers and sisters and cousins, understanding the bargain that I had made, told me that I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.

“This, however,” he adds, “was of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *‘Don’t give too much for the whistle;’* so I saved my money.”

“As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, who gave too much for the whistle.”

The next year after this memorable event, when his elder brothers were put apprentices to

different trades, young Benjamin was sent to the grammar-school, his father intending to carry out the Jewish law, in devoting him as the tithe of his sons, to the service of the church, as a minister.

“My early readiness in learning to read,” he says, “(which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read), and the opinion of all my father’s friends, encouraged him in this purpose of his. My uncle Benjamin, too, approved of it, and proposed to give me all his short-hand volumes of sermons, I suppose as a stock to set up with. I continued, however, at the grammar-school not quite one year, though in that time I had risen gradually from the middle of the class to be the head of it, and farther, was removed into the next class above it, in order to go with that into the third at the end of the year.”

The father’s regard for the Jewish law of tithes seems to have been overborne by the law of necessity, the expense of a college course being, he thought, beyond his means. There was another reason, peculiarly Franklinian, for giving up his plan of educating a son for the ministry; it was, that so many in that profession obtained but a “mean living.” The father, good Christian though he was, could readily descend from the spiritual to the material. Perhaps in this we find one reason why the illustrious son seldom rose from the material to the spiritual.

From the grammar-school and prospective lessons in Greek and Latin, the boy of nine years was sent to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brown-

ell. Here he made respectable proficiency in writing, but failed in arithmetic, at which we wonder. The next year, when he was ten years old, he was taken home to assist his father in his business, and was set to "cutting wicks for the candles, filling the dipping-mold and the molds for cast-candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc." Thus ended his school-life, but not his education. The new occupation, however, did not suit him. He had "a strong inclination for the sea," which was much against his father's wishes, he having had a sorry experience in that line from an older son, Josiah, who years before had run away to sea, and had never sent back a message of where he was, or what had befallen him. But it was not all work with no play.

"Living near the water," says Franklin, "I was much in and about it, learnt early to swim well, and to manage boats; and when in a boat or canoe with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys" (as he was afterwards a leader among men), "and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, though not then justly conducted.

"There was a salt-marsh that bounded part of the mill-pond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for minnows. By much trampling we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharf there fit for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near



the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my playfellows, and working with them diligently, like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharf. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which were found in our wharf. Inquiry was made after the removers; we were discovered and complained of; several of us were corrected by our fathers; and, although I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest."

Here we see the philosopher in the roguish boy; and one can easily believe that the grave father, before proceeding to lay the rod upon the culprit's back, inwardly smiled, and proudly too, at his attempt to prove the usefulness of his work. Perhaps the famous adage of "Poor Richard," *Honesty is the best policy*, may be traced back to the father's wise reproof.

Young Franklin also took great delight in swimming, and he ever regarded it as a "most healthy and agreeable exercise." Writing to a friend, long years after, he said:—

"I cannot be of opinion with you, that it is too late in life for you to learn to swim. The river near the bottom of your garden affords a most convenient place for the purpose. And, as your new employment requires your being often on the water, of which you have such a dread, I think you would do well to make the trial; nothing being so likely to remove those apprehensions, as is the consciousness of an ability to swim to the shore in case of an accident, or of sup-

porting yourself in the water till a boat could come to take you up."

Writing to another friend, when now an old man, he told this story of his boyhood :

"When I was a boy I made two oval pallets, each about ten inches long, and six broad, with a hole for the thumb, in order to retain it fast in the palm of my hand. They much resembled a painter's pallets. In swimming I pushed the edges of these forward, and I struck the water with their flat surfaces as I drew them back. I remember I swam faster by means of these pallets, but they fatigued my wrists. I also fitted to the soles of my feet a kind of sandals; but I was not satisfied with them, because I observed that the stroke is partly given by the inside of the feet and ankles, and not entirely with the soles of the feet."

The little philosopher was even then connecting science with sport, of which he gives us another example : —

"I amused myself one day with flying a paper kite; and approaching the bank of a pond, which was near a mile broad, I tied the string to a stake, and the kite ascended to a very considerable height above the pond, while I was swimming. In a little time, being desirous of amusing myself with my kite, and enjoying at the same time the pleasure of swimming, I returned; and, loosing from the stake the string with the little stick which was fastened to it, went again into the water, where I found that, lying on my back, and holding the stick in my hands, I was drawn along the surface of the water in a very agreeable manner. Having then engaged another boy to carry my clothes round the pond, to a place which I pointed out to him on the other side, I began to cross the pond with my kite, which carried me quite over

without the least fatigue, and with the greatest pleasure imaginable. I was only obliged, occasionally, to halt a little in my course, and resist the progress, when it appeared that, by following too quick, I lowered the kite too much; by doing which occasionally, I made it rise again. I have never since that time practiced this singular mode of swimming, though I think it not impossible to cross in this manner from Dover to Calais."

This familiarity with the water in his boyish days enabled him later in life to perform an almost incredible feat. In his journal, July 25, 1785, when he was in England, and now seventy-nine years old, he wrote :

"I went at noon to bathe in Martin's salt-water hot-bath, and, floating on my back, fell asleep, and slept near an hour by my watch, without sinking or turning! A thing I never did before, and should hardly have thought possible. Water is the easiest bed that can be."

## CHAPTER III.

*His Brother John. — Dislikes his Father's Trade. — Looking for a Trade. — Fond of Books. — The Books he Read. — Cotton Mather. — Becomes a Printer's Apprentice to his Brother James. — Borrowing Books. — Writing Poetry and Prose. — Improving his Style. — How he Bought Books. — His Diet. — The Character of his Reading. — Fond of Discussions.*

"I continued," writes Franklin, "in my father's business for the year, that is, till I was twelve years old; and my brother John, who was bred to that business, having left my father, married, and set up for himself in Rhode Island, there was all appearance that I was destined to supply his place, and become a tallow-chandler. But my dislike to the trade continuing, my father was under apprehensions that if he did not find one for me more agreeable, I should break away and get to sea, as his son Josiah had done, to his great vexation. He therefore sometimes took me to walk with him, and see joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, etc., at their work, that he might observe my inclination, and endeavor to fix it on some trade or other on hand. It has ever since been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been useful to me, having learnt so much by it as to be able to do little jobs myself in my house when a workman could not readily be got, and to con-

struct little machines for my experiments, while the intention of making the experiment was fresh and warm in my mind. My father at last fixed upon the cutler's trade, and my Uncle Benjamin's son Samuel, who was bred to that business in London, being about that time established in Boston, I was sent to be with him some time on liking. But his expectations of a fee with me displeasing my father, I was taken home again."

This period of uncertainty and change was far from being lost time. We have seen the boy's habits of close observation, and his inventive turn of mind. Though not at school, he was always learning something new, which he afterward turned to account when he became a man. His very sports were scientific experiments, his sad experience with the stone wharf was a lesson in engineering. He was also a great reader. From a very early age he had a book in his hand, and this fondness for reading was to prove the clue to lead him to a suitable trade. "All the little money that came into my hands," he tells us, "was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the Pilgrim's Progress, my first collection was of John Bunyan's works, in separate little volumes." These he afterwards sold to enable him to buy a work in forty or fifty small volumes, much praised by Dr. Johnson, Burton's Historical Collections. But such a mind as his, so eager for knowledge, was sure to wander into other pastures. What he could not buy he would borrow. Lighting upon Plutarch's Lives, he read them with great avidity and advantage, and

no wonder ; for as has been truly said, "The charm of Plutarch's writings has been felt and owned by old and young, soldier and statesman, the philosopher and the man of business."

Franklin tells us that a book of De Foe's, called an Essay on Projects, and another of Dr. Mather's, called Essays to do Good, written in quaint style, like everything else from his prolific pen, gave him a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the future events of his life. A letter which he wrote in 1784, when he was seventy-eight years old, to Samuel Mather, shows the influence of a good book.

"When I was a boy, I met with a book entitled "Essays to do Good," which I think was written by your father (Cotton Mather). It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good*, than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book."

One thing is to be noted ; Franklin, boy that he was, knew *how* to read. He read good books, and read them carefully, so as to make them his own possession. They instructed him and stimulated him.

"This bookish inclination," he informs us, "at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my brother returned from England with a press and letters to

set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out for some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother."

He is careful to tell us that he now had access to better books. There were several bookstores in the town, and now and then he borrowed a small book from the apprentices of the book-sellers, which he returned "soon and clean." Often he read far into the night, that the book thus sily drawn by a young friend's hand from the store shelves at evening, might be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted. He also found a friend in "an ingenious tradesman," Mr. Matthew Adams, who, observing his literary enthusiasm, invited him to his library, "a pretty collection of books," and very kindly loaned him such as he wanted.

He now took a fancy to poetry, and began to compose ballads.

"One," he tells us, "was called 'The Light-house Tragedy,' and contained an account of the drowning of Captain Worthlake, with his two daughters: the other was a 'Sailor's Song,' on the taking of Teach (or Blackhead) the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-street-ballad style; and when they were printed, he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event, being

recent, having made a great noise. This flattered my vanity: but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one."

He now wisely turned his attention to prose-writing, his success in which, he tells us, was of great use to him in after life, and a principal means of his advancement. His style, even when a young man, was remarkable for its purity, simplicity and grace, as well as for its manly vigor.

His thirst for knowledge made it necessary that he should devise some means of raising money for buying books. He was now about sixteen years of age, an age when boys are apt to have ravenous appetites, and to be content with nothing short of an ample supply of good things. But Franklin had learned from his father the difficult lesson of being quite indifferent to the quality of his food. Give him plain fare and he asked no more. This helped him to a happy financial expedient. A book, recommending a vegetable diet, just then falling in his way, with which he was much pleased, he proposed to his brother, who, being unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family, that if he would give him weekly half the money paid for his board, he would board himself. He found that he could save half that was paid him, and so he had a book-fund.

"But," he adds, "I had another advantage in it. My



brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, dispatching presently my light repast, which often was no more than a biscuit or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water, had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head, and quicker apprehension, which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking."

About this time, also, he made up his deficiency in arithmetic, read two books on navigation, and made a slight acquaintance with geometry. The solidity and maturity of his mind, even so young, are seen in his reading such works as Locke *On the Human Understanding*, and the *Art of Thinking*, by the Port-Royalists.

In a little work on English grammar, he found something upon rhetoric and logic, and a specimen of the Socratic method of disputation. He procured, also, a translation of the *Memorabilia* of Socrates, with which he was greatly charmed, and he resolved to drop his positive and dogmatic style of argument, and "put on the humble inquirer and doubter." Having become something of a free-thinker from the perusal of infidel books, he took pleasure in applying his new method of reasoning to religious subjects. With an air of peculiar sincerity and candor, as if his only wish was to discover truth, he would modestly start inquiries, and draw people, even of superior knowledge, into entangling concessions, by which he gained an apparent easy

victory. This was more gratifying to his pride than favorable to the discovery of truth, and tended to confirm him in views which he had done better not to entertain. The real humility which leads to truth was wanting. He came to some such conclusion himself, after a few years, and formed the habit of expressing himself in terms of modest diffidence. Instead of the words *certainly*, *undoubtedly*, and others which had an air of positiveness, he would say, "*I should think it so and so*, for such and such reasons; or, "*I imagine it to be so*," or, "*It is so, if I am not mistaken*."

"This habit," he adds, "has, I believe, been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting; and, as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure."

## CHAPTER IV.

*The New Paper in Franklin's Day. — A News-boy. — Writing for a Newspaper. — His Brother James a Hard Master. — Benjamin becomes Manager of the Courant. — Resolves to Break his Engagement.*

THE newspaper is peculiarly a modern institution. Within the latter part of the present century it has become a great power in the world. But in Franklin's day it was, comparatively, a feeble child, of small size and scant utterance, giving but faint promise of the proportions it has since assumed, and the vast influence it now exerts. The first attempt at an American newspaper, in Boston, in the year 1690, was suppressed by the authorities, as a dangerous innovation, a second number never seeing the light.\* It was fourteen years before any person again essayed so formidable a venture. In 1704, the Boston News-Letter asked permission to publish, on the half of a foolscap sheet, — "by authority," it is careful to state — a few harmless advertisements and items of news. It would not venture to express an opin-

\* Frothingham's Rise of the Republic, page 129.

ion. Readers were left to draw their own inferences. Though Massachusetts has the honor of having established, as the first college, so also the first printing-press in America, yet it detracts from her credit that, from the first, she put restrictions upon its freedom, keeping a sharp look-out upon its issues, lest some erroneous doctrine, or some opinion derogatory to the government, should by it obtain currency. Legal restraints were not removed till 1755, nearly fifty years after Franklin's birth. And so Mr. Campbell, the editor, spoke only as he was authorized.

In 1719, appeared the Boston Gazette, which was printed by James Franklin, who, the year after, commenced a paper of his own, The New England Courant. "He was dissuaded," says his brother Benjamin, "by some of his friends, from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being, in their judgment, enough for America." But he believed there was room for another, of a superior character to what had yet appeared, and went forward with his undertaking, being both editor and printer. Benjamin, the apprentice, was employed to carry the paper through the streets to the customers. He began with being a news-boy, and a large part of his subsequent life was devoted to manufacturing and scattering news. He was a history-maker on a large scale.

Such a bright, ingenious spirit as his could not be confined to the mere mechanical drudgery of

a newspaper. "Hearing the conversations of several contributors, and their accounts of the approbation their papers were received with, he was excited to try his hand among them." He was now in his sixteenth year. In a disguised hand he prepared an anonymous article, and placed it under the door of the printing-house. "It was found," he says, "in the morning, and communicated to his friends, when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but were of some character among us for learning and ingenuity." He was thus encouraged to write several more papers, which were also a success. But when a quite natural vanity led him to divulge his secret, and he began to take a higher place in the consideration of the printing-house coterie, his brother became a little jealous of the rising reputation of his apprentice-boy. He told Benjamin that literary aspirations made him vain, which the youthful writer tells us was very probably true. James Franklin seems to have been a hard master. He was passionate, and often beat his apprentice, forgetting that the apprentice was also a brother. They had many disputes between them, which, when carried before their father, were generally decided in favor of the younger. The yoke was burdensome to a person of Benjamin's spirit, and in an unexpected manner an opportunity

came for throwing it off. He thus tells the story of his deliverance:—

“One of the pieces in our newspaper, on some political point, which I have now forgotten, gave offense to the Assembly. My brother was taken up, censured, and imprisoned for a month by the speaker’s warrant, I suppose, because he would not discover his author. I, too, was taken up and examined before the council, but though I did not give them any satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me, and dismissed me, considering me, perhaps, as an apprentice, who was bound to keep his master’s secrets.

“During my brother’s confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of the paper; and I made bold to give our rulers some rules in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavorable light, as a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satire. My brother’s discharge was accompanied with an order of the House (a very odd one), that ‘*James Franklin should no longer print the paper called the New England Courant.*’”

The Courant, we may remark, was a very independent and racy paper, “touching with great freedom the vices and follies of the time. The weapon of satire was used with an unsparing hand. Neither the government nor the clergy escaped.” It contained “some severe and humorous criticisms on the poets of the day, which may be classed with the best specimens of this kind of composition in the modern reviews.”\*

After due consultation among the friends of the paper, it was decided to print it under the

\* Sparks, Vol. I.

name of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN; and, to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that might come from its being printed by an apprentice, he was to be cleared from his indenture, and to sign new papers, which were to be kept private. And so the ill-used apprentice had gained a position of more independence. Fresh differences ere long having arisen between the brothers, Benjamin used his advantage to break his engagement and assert his freedom, believing that his brother would not dare to produce the indentures. He had some scruples as to the propriety of this course, but his feelings of resentment prevailed, and he quit the office. His brother was of course indignant, and took his revenge by representing Benjamin in an unfavorable light at all the other printing-houses in the town, so as to prevent his getting employment. It is possible that he may have thought to get his brother back by reducing him to extremities. Benjamin, however, had no intention of returning to his bondage. He had a brave spirit, and believed that he could look out for himself. And so ended his life in Boston. He went forth to seek his fortune.

## CHAPTER V.

*Runs Away. — Goes in a Sloop to New York. — Vegetarian Principles Tested. — Eating Fish. In New York. — Seeks Employment at his Trade. — Goes to Philadelphia. — The Voyage. — A Dutchman Overboard. — Stops at Burlington. — Dr. Brown. — Reaches Philadelphia. — Description of the City. — Walking the Streets. — Eating Rolls. — Falls Asleep in a Meeting-house. — Bradford the Printer. — Keimer.*

FRANKLIN was now seventeen years of age, and of course still under his father's guardianship. He well knew that his father would not consent to his leaving Boston, especially as he blamed him for breaking with his brother, and was, perhaps, hoping to persuade him to return to the office. But to go he was determined, and the only course open before him was to run away. He was the more inclined to this from having made himself obnoxious to the governing party, and from the consequent fear that a further stay might bring him into trouble. Besides, his indiscreet disputations about religion had brought him into disrepute with the good people of the town. He was by no means a coward.



as he had already shown ; in fact, he had given too much license to his tongue and pen ; but, as he had probably acted the part rather of a sportive cavalier than of an earnest champion of truth, seeking more to surprise and annoy, or else to amuse, by startling novelties, than to produce conviction, he easily persuaded himself that it would be advisable, certainly more agreeable, to transfer himself to a new field of action. But it required some ingenuity to escape unobserved. As we have seen from the experience of Madame Knight, it was no short and easy excursion to New York, to which town he had made up his mind, if possible, to go, as the nearest place where there was a printer. His friend Collins, the "bookish" young man, offered to manage for him, and secured him a passage in a New York sloop, making up a little story to deceive the captain. With a little money in his pocket, obtained from the sale of some of his books, from which he was probably the more willing to part from having their contents well stored away in his head, he was taken privately on board. Off Block Island they were becalmed, and the crew made a fine haul of cod. Franklin's vegetarian principles were now put to a severe test. So far he had stuck to his resolution to eat nothing that had life, and he regarded the capture of these fish as little short of murder. He would not share in the guilt by partaking of them. But the savory smell of the fish, as they came out of the frying-pan, produced a violent conflict

between principle and inclination. A mind so ingenious as his was not long, however, in suspense, especially in sight and smell of a favorite article of food. He would not yield to appetite without a reason, but such relief was speedily found. He recollected that, when the fish were opened, he saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs, and the happy thought flashed upon him, "If you eat one another, I don't see why we may not eat you." Thus, at once, reason, conscience and appetite all conspired to banish his scruples. He dined heartily upon the fish, and was so well satisfied with the conclusion to which he had come, that from that time he only now and then returned to a vegetable diet. "So convenient a thing it is," says this happy logician, "to be a *reasonable creature*, since it enables one to find or make a *reason* for everything one has a mind to."

After this, a fair wind, springing up, took the vessel in three days to New York. Here he found himself three hundred miles from home, a stranger to everybody, without a letter of recommendation, and almost without money. But he had a brave heart, a comfortable amount of self-reliance, and a trade. His passion for the sea had been cured by the taste of it he had got on his brief voyage, and he set himself at once to seeking employment. He applied to the one printer of the town, which was then a smaller place than Boston, with only seven or eight thousand inhabitants. The printing-business was

not flourishing, where there was not even a single newspaper or bookstore. Mr. Bradford had all the help he needed, and advised the young printer to go to Philadelphia. This was a hundred miles further, but what was that to a stout-hearted youth with his head full of ideas, resolved to make his way in the world? He accordingly set out in a boat for Amboy, leaving his chest of things — great things they were — to follow him round by sea.

In crossing the bay, a squall tore the rotten sails to pieces, and drove the vessel upon Long Island. On their way a drunken Dutchman fell overboard, and when he was sinking, Franklin caught hold of him by his “shock-pate” and drew him up.

“His ducking sobered him a little,” adds Franklin, “and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book, which he desired I would dry for him. It proved to be my old favorite author, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, in Dutch, finely printed, on good paper, copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language.

“On approaching the island, we found it was in a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surge on the stony beach. So we dropped anchor, and swung out our cable towards the shore. Some people came down to the shore and halloed to us, as we did to them; but the wind was so high, and the surge so loud, that we could not understand each other. There were some small boats near the shore, and we made signs, and called to them to fetch us; but they either did not comprehend us, or it was impracticable, so they went off. Night approaching, we had no remedy but to have patience till the wind abated; and in the

meantime the boatman and myself concluded to sleep, if we could; and so we crowded into the hatches, where we joined the Dutchman, who was still wet, and the spray breaking over the head of our boat, leaked through to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night, with very little rest; but, the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night; having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum; the water we sailed on being salt.

“In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went to bed; but, having read somewhere that cold water drunk plentifully was good for a fever, I followed the prescription, and sweat plentifully most of the night. My fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to go to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats, that would carry me the rest of my way to Philadelphia.

“It rained very hard all the day: I was thoroughly soaked, and by noon a good deal tired; so I stopped at a poor inn, where I stayed all night; beginning now to wish I had never left home. I made so miserable a figure, too, that I found by the questions asked me, I was suspected to be some runaway, indentured servant, and in danger of being taken up on suspicion. However, I proceeded next day, and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown. He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and, finding I had read a little, became very obliging and friendly. Our acquaintance continued all the rest of his life. He had been, I imagine, an ambulatory quack doctor, for there was no town in England, nor any country in Europe, of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters, and was ingenious, but he was an infidel, and wickedly undertook, some years after, to turn the Bible into doggerel

verse. . . . By this means he set many facts in a ridiculous light, and might have done mischief with weak minds, if his work had been published; but it never was.

“At his house I lay that night, and arrived the next day in Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before, and no other was expected to go before Tuesday, this being Saturday. Wherefore I returned to an old woman in the town, of whom I had bought some gingerbread to eat on the water, and asked her advice. She proposed to lodge me till a passage by some other boat occurred. I accepted her offer, being much fatigued by travelling on foot. Understanding I was a printer, she would have had me remain in that town and follow my business; being ignorant what stock was necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of ox-cheek with great good-will, accepting only a pot of ale in return; and I thought myself fixed till Tuesday should come. However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going towards Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and, as there was no wind, we rowed all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no further; the others knew not where we were, so we put towards the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper’s Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arrived there about eight or nine o’clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at Market-street wharf.”

And so Boston has lost one of her brightest minds, of whom afterwards she was to be proud,

and Philadelphia has gained a new citizen, in disguise at present, only a full-grown boy, poor, and looking for work whereby to earn an honest living, but destined to add new lustre to his adopted city. See him in his working-dress, his best clothes being yet on the way, soiled and unprepossessing, his pockets stuffed out with shirts and stockings, weary with rowing and walking, and want of sleep, hungry, a single dollar all that was left after paying for his passage a copper shilling, a sum refused by the kind-hearted boatmen, but which his independent spirit forced them to accept; for, as he afterwards shrewdly said, in relating his adventures, "man is sometimes more generous when he has little money, than when he has plenty; perhaps to prevent his being thought to have little."

Philadelphia was then a town of seven thousand inhabitants, "a faire, greene country town," the houses built of brick or stone, and surrounded by gardens and orchards. It was a goodly place to live in, among the peace-loving Friends, with plenty for everybody, and abounding in delicious fruits. But we will let him continue his own story; —

"I walked towards the top of the street, gazing about till near Market street, where I met a boy with bread. I had often made a meal of dry bread, and, inquiring where he had bought it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to. I asked for biscuits, meaning such as we had in Boston; that sort, it seems, was not made in Philadelphia. I then asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none.

Not knowing the different prices, nor the names of the different sorts of bread, I told him to give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great, puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets — already occupied by his shirts and stockings — “walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Then I went up Market street as far as Fourth street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife’s father; when she” — then a girl of eighteen — “standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, and certainly I did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market-street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

“Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers, near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round awhile, and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when some one was kind enough to rouse me. This, therefore, was the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

“I then walked down towards the river, and looking in the faces of everyone, I met a young Quaker man, whose countenance pleased me, and, accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get a lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. ‘Here,’ said he, ‘is a house where they receive strangers, but it is not a reputa-

ble one;' and he conducted me to the Crooked Billet in Water Street. There I got a dinner; and while I was eating, several questions were asked me, as, from my youth and appearance, I was suspected of being a runaway.

After dinner my host having shown me to a bed, I laid myself on it without undressing, and slept till six in the evening, when I was called to supper. I went to bed again very early, and slept very soundly till next morning. Then I dressed myself as neat as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford, the printer's. I found in the shop the old man his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, traveling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduced me to his son, who received me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately supplied with one; but there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who, perhaps, might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then, till fuller business should offer.

"The old gentleman said he would go with me to the new printer; and, when we found him, 'Neighbor,' said Bradford, 'I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps you may want such a one.' He asked me a few questions, put a composing-stick in my hand, to see how I worked, and then said he would employ me soon, though he had just then nothing for me to do. And taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, to be one of the towns-people that had a good will for him, entered into a conversation on his present undertaking and prospects; while Bradford, not disclosing that he was the other printer's father, on Keimer's saying he expected soon to get the greatest part of the business into his own hands, drew him on by artful questions, and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what influence he relied on, and in what manner he



intended to proceed. I, who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one was a crafty old sophister, and the other a true novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surprised when I told him who the old man was."

The young Bostonian must have recalled to mind his own sophistical encounters in his native town, when he artfully drew on his antagonists to make concessions, which he skilfully turned against them.

## CHAPTER VI.

*In Philadelphia. — Keimer. — Hears from Home.  
— Sir William Keith. — Keith becomes Franklin's Patron. — Keith's Proposal to Franklin.  
— Brilliant Prospects.*

Philadelphia did not present a brilliant opening to our young adventurer. Fortunately he was willing to work his way up by gradual advances. Give him a chance, and he was content to trust to time and his own talents for promotion.

Introduced as above to Keimer, he cast a look about the printing-house, which contained an old damaged press, and a small, worn-out font of English. Keimer was then composing an elegy on his late principal hand, an intelligent young man, of excellent character, who had been secretary to the Assembly. He was pleased to consider himself a poet, and was accustomed to set up his verses as he manufactured them, directly out of his head, without the trouble of writing them. Franklin would have helped him, but, of course, there was no copy, and, besides, but one pair of cases. So he made himself useful by putting the press, which had not been

used, in such order as he could, and then, taking his leave, he promised to come again and print off the elegy as soon as it was ready. Returning to Bradford's, he there found a little job waiting for him, and at his house he "lodged and dieted." A few days after, he was sent for Keimer having by this time got another pair of cases and a pamphlet to reprint, upon which Franklin was set to work.

"This man, though something of a scholar," says Franklin, "was a mere compositor, knowing nothing of press-work. He had been one of the French prophets, and could act their enthusiastic agitations. At this time, he did not profess any particular religion, but something of all on occasion; was very ignorant of the world, and had, as I afterward found, a good deal of the knave in his composition. He did not like my lodging at Bradford's while I worked with him. He had a house indeed, but without furniture; so he could not lodge me; but he got me a lodging at Mr. Read's, before mentioned, who was the owner of his house; and my chest of clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more acceptable appearance in the eyes of Miss Read, than I had done when she first happened to see me eating my roll in the street."

He now began to feel at home in Philadelphia. He made the acquaintance of some young people, who were fond of reading, with whom he spent his evenings very pleasantly. His industry and frugality also enabled him to lay up some money. But what, meanwhile, are his thoughts of the old home in Boston? He tells us that he tried to forget it as much as possible.

His brother's injustice and cruelty had thoroughly weaned him from his native town; he had no wish to return. And for fear that his present residence might be discovered, he had never written to his parents. Collins alone had the secret.

But a new turn to his affairs was at hand. A brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, master of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware, being at Newcastle, forty miles below Philadelphia, and hearing where Franklin was, wrote to him how grieved his parents were at his departure, and how warm a welcome they would give him if he would return. The letter did not persuade Franklin, but it had an important influence on his future course. It happened that when Franklin's reply reached Holmes, Sir William Keith, governor of the province, was at Newcastle, and it was shown to him. He was surprised that a youth of seventeen should compose such a letter, which doubtless set forth in clear and strong terms the reasons that had determined his leaving Boston. He said that a young man of such promising talents ought to be encouraged. Neither of the printers in Philadelphia understood his business, and there was room for a new one to set up. He was sure that Franklin would succeed. He would promise him the public printing, and assist him every way in his power. For some reason, perhaps because he hoped to entice his brother-in-law back to Boston, Holmes did not tell him of this

conversation, until after he had learned the Governor's good-will from his own lips. What then was Franklin's surprise when, one day, some time after this correspondence, two finely dressed gentlemen, one of them Governor Keith, were seen by Keimer and his assistant, as they stood working by the window, coming directly across the street to the shop. Keimer, of course, thought the Governor sought an interview with himself, and ran down stairs to meet him. But it was young Franklin that was wanted. The Governor, having come in, addressed him in very complimentary terms, blamed him kindly for not having made himself known to him at his first coming to the town, and ended with wishing the astonished young printer to go to the tavern with him and his friend, Col. French, and have a taste of some excellent madeira. Poor Keimer being left with his type, Franklin, not knowing what to make of it, accepted the invitation, and was soon discussing, with these gentlemen, the subject of his setting up in business. This was Franklin's first experience with persons of title and rank, and we have little doubt that, young though he was, he bore himself, if not with the grace, yet with something of the self-possession, which in later years marked his intercourse with the great of the world. He was modest and unassuming, but he knew something of his own power, and was not easy to be daunted by the show of greatness. It was a strange sight, the ill-used apprentice, a run-

away from home, so lately munching gingerbread through the streets, now sitting at his ease with gentlemen of position, and talking business with the gravity of a sage. He was assured of their interest and influence to obtain for him the public printing of both Pennsylvania and Delaware. When Franklin objected the want of capital, and his doubts of any assistance from his father, the Governor offered to give him a letter to take to him, in which he would set forth the advantages of the plan. So it was concluded that he should return to Boston by the first vessel. But the matter was in the meantime to be kept a secret. Franklin went on working with Keimer, being now and then invited to dine with the Governor, which he considered a great honor.

## CHAPTER VII.

*A New Plan. — Returns to Boston. — Welcomed Home. — Ill-treated by James. — Visits his Brother's Office. — Calls on Cotton Mather. — Stooping. — His Father Disapproves of Governor Keith's Plan. — Consents to his Return to Philadelphia. — He Embarks for New York. — Visits his Brother at Newport. — Mr. Vernon. — At New York. — Collins. — Governor Burnet. — Incident on the Delaware. — A Green Meadow. — Sad Experience with Collins. — Rupture.*

Homeward bound. Franklin had been away from Boston about seven months. He was now to return; not, however, in disgrace, but bearing a letter from the Governor of Pennsylvania to his father, recommending him to encourage and aid his son to set up in business in Philadelphia, as a thing sure to make his fortune. He must have felt not a little proud as he embarked on board a little vessel bound to Boston, at the end of April, 1724. To be sure, he did not know just how he would be received at home, for his conscience told him that he had wronged his parents, and he did not care, perhaps, to meet

his brother James. However, he was disposed to look upon the bright side of things, and, on the whole, he must have enjoyed the thought of going back under present circumstances. He would not object to show his brother that he could live without him and in spite of him, and that single-handed and alone he had done better for himself than when dependent on others.

After a blustering voyage, during which, from having struck a leak as they were going down the bay, they had to pump almost continually, the vessel anchored safely at Boston in about a fortnight. During his absence his friends had heard not a word of him, and his sudden appearance surprised them. The family gave him a warm welcome, all except the brother. James did not come to see him, and Benjamin went to his office. This was magnanimous in the younger brother. He was not received very graciously. His brother surveyed him from head to foot, and turned to his work again, but Benjamin had the pleasure of feeling that he was better dressed than when in his brother's service, having on a new genteel suit, and also a watch, and his pockets lined with nearly five pounds sterling in silver. He did not cringe, and neither did he boast; he was simply a man, boy though he was in years.

The journeymen were struck with his appearance, and asked him many questions about



Philadelphia. He was not backward in praising it, and the happy life he led in it, adding that nothing could dissuade him from returning. They were astonished when he produced a handful of silver, paper being the money of Boston. He did not forget to show them his watch, and on leaving he gave them a dollar for drink, according to the prevailing foolish custom. The brother saw and heard all this, glum and sullen. He took the visit very ill, saying afterward that he had received a personal insult in the presence of his apprentices, and that he could never forget or forgive it. And he gave this as a reason to his mother against reconciliation, when she plead that the brothers might be on good terms again. He was a man of sullen temper, and of mean spirit, and one cannot blame his brother for not wishing to live with him.

While in Boston, Franklin called on the famous Cotton Mather, then sixty-one years of age.

"He received me," says Franklin, in a letter, written sixty years after, when residing in France, to a son of Mather, "in his library, and on my taking leave, showed me a shorter way out of the house through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam over-head. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I, turning partly toward him, when he said hastily, '*Stoop! Stoop!*' I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me: "*You are young, and have the world before you;*

*STOOP as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*’ This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me; and I often think of it when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people, by their carrying their heads too high.”

But what of the business which had brought him to Boston? The Governor’s letter was read by his father with some surprise, but he said little about it for some time. On Captain Holmes’ return, he showed it to him, and asked him what he knew about Sir William Keith, adding that, in his opinion, he was a man of small discretion to think of setting up in business a youth who was three years short of man’s estate. Holmes’ favorable opinion of the project made no impression upon Josiah Franklin’s mind. He gave a flat denial. It was, he thought, a foolish enterprise, upon which he was unwilling to risk any money. The matter ended with his writing a civil reply to Sir William, thanking him for the patronage he had so kindly offered, and declining to assist his son, as yet, in setting up.

Benjamin was now again his father’s ward. He did not care to run away a second time, though inwardly bent on returning. He would wait his father’s pleasure, believing that his consent would not be long withheld. Nor was he disappointed. His father, seeing how well he had carried himself in Philadelphia, how industrious and frugal he had been, and what distinguished friends he had made, and besides,

seeing how far his older son was from a kindly disposition toward him, gave free consent to his return. All he gave him in the way of capital was some good advice, especially to abstain from "lampooning and libelling," and to treat everybody respectfully. He told him that by industry and prudence he might save enough by the time he was twenty-one, to set himself up in business, and that if then he needed a little help, he would do what he could for him. So, with some small gifts as tokens of his father's and mother's love, he embarked again for New York; this time with their full approval.

On the way the sloop put in at Newport, where he visited his brother John, who had been married and settled there some years.

"He received me very affectionately," says Franklin, "for he always loved me." Benjamin was charged with a little business by a friend of his brother, a Mr. Vernon, who wished him to collect some money due him in Philadelphia, about thirty-five pounds currency, which he was to retain until further instructions.

At New York he found his friend Collins, who had determined to make Philadelphia his home, and who had set out previously by land, leaving his books to come with Franklin to New York. Collins and Franklin had been intimate from children, and had read the same books together, Collins being the superior in mathematics. But unfortunately the good reputation

which he had had for learning and sobriety were lost by intemperate habits. He was drunk every day after his arrival in New York, and behaved in a disgraceful manner. He gambled away all his money, so that his bills in New York, and his expenses on the journey and at Philadelphia, had to come out of Franklin's pocket, a burden he was ill able to bear.

Burnet, son of the well-known Bishop Burnet, was at this time Governor of New York. Being himself a lover of books, and hearing that a passenger in the vessel just arrived had many books on board, he desired the captain to bring him to his house. Franklin waited on the Governor, leaving Collins behind, who was not in a condition to go. The youth of eighteen was received with great civility. He was shown the library, which was quite large for that time, and the Governor and the young printer had much pleasant conversation about books and authors. "This," says Franklin, "was the second governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me; and for a poor boy, like me, it was very pleasing."

On the passage to Philadelphia, in a small sloop, while descending the river Delaware, a little incident occurred.

"There being no wind," says Franklin, "we were obliged, when the ebb was spent, to cast anchor, and wait for the next. The heat of the sun on the vessel was excessive, the company strangers to me, and not very agreeable. Near the river side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green meadow,

in the middle of which was a large shady tree, where, it struck my fancy, I could sit and read (having a book in my pocket), and pass the time agreeably till the tide turned. I therefore prevailed with the captain to put me ashore. Being landed, I found the greatest part of my meadow was really a marsh, in crossing which, to come at my tree, I was up to my knees in mud; and I had not placed myself under its shade five minutes before the mosquitoes in swarms found me out, attacked my legs, hands, and face, and made my reading and my rest impossible; so that I returned to the beach, and called for the boat to come and take me on board again, where I was obliged to bear the heat I had strove to quit, and also the laugh of the company."

This account was written when Franklin was seventy-four years of age, in a letter to a friend, and he added, as the result of fifty-six years' experience, "Similar cases have since frequently fallen under my observation." The incident was related to show that "all human situations have their inconveniences; we *feel* those that we find in the present, and we neither *feel* nor *see* those that exist in another. Hence we make frequent and troublesome changes without amendment, and often for the worse."

On the way, Franklin received Mr. Vernon's money, from which he was unfortunately compelled to draw, in order to meet the expenses of the journey, Collins being wholly on his hands. When they reached the city, this untimely companion, being unable to find employment, in consequence of his bad habits, was a continual burden, lodging and boarding at the same house

with Franklin, and at his expense. He had lost all sense of shame, being willing to live by borrowing from his too generous friend. The worst of it was, that the money given, or, as Collins was pleased to consider it, loaned, to a worthless fellow, who could never refund it, did not belong to Franklin. He knew not when it might be called for, and it distressed him to know what he should do, in case he should be required to remit it. It was noble in Franklin to feel an interest in his old friend, in his degradation, but he ought to have refused to risk money which was not his own, even for a friend. He afterwards regarded his course in this respect as one of the great mistakes of his life. It occasioned him much anxiety for years.

Collins went on from bad to worse, and now and then he and Franklin quarrelled, for his conduct was sometimes more than could be endured.

"Once," says Franklin, "in a boat on the Delaware with some other young men, he refused to row in his turn. 'I will be rowed home,' said he. 'We will not row you,' said I. 'You must,' said he, 'or stay all night on the water, just as you please.' The others said, 'Let us row, what signifies it?' But my mind being soured with his other conduct, I continued to refuse. So he swore he would make me row, or throw me overboard; and coming along, stepping on the thwarts toward me, when he came up and struck at me, I clapped my head under his thighs, and, rising, pitched him head foremost into the water. I knew he was a good swimmer, and so was under little concern about him; but before

he could get round to lay hold of the boat, we had with a few strokes pulled her out of his reach; and whenever he drew near the boat, we asked him if he would row, striking her a few strokes to slide her away from him. He was ready to stifle with vexation, and obstinately would not promise to row. Finding him at last beginning to tire, we drew him into the boat, and brought him home dripping wet. We hardly exchanged a civil word after this adventure. At length a West India captain, who had a commission to procure a preceptor for the sons of a gentleman at Barbadoes, met with him, and proposed to carry him thither to fill that situation. He accepted, and promised to remit me what he owed me out of the first money he should receive, but I never heard of him after."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*In Philadelphia. — Calls on Governor Keith. — New Promises. — Plan for Setting up in Business. — Vernon's Money. — Keimer. — Thoughts of Marriage. — Miss Read. — A Prudent Mother.*

FRANKLIN was probably somewhat curious to know what plan his distinguished patron, the Governor, would now propose. He called upon him with his father's letter. Sir William, on reading it, was pleased to say that the good man was too prudent. Discretion did not always go with years. And he generously offered to do what the excessively careful father had declined doing. "Give me," said he, in the ardor of his generosity, "an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. Repay me when you are able; I am resolved to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed." This was said with every appearance of cordiality. Franklin had yet to learn that he was depending upon a man liberal in promises which he never meant to keep. He thought him one of the best men in the world.

He was not slow in presenting his patron with an inventory of articles necessary in a printing-



office, amounting to about a hundred pounds sterling. The money was not, however, forthcoming, but, instead, another grand plan. The patron was pleased with the inventory, but asked whether the type and other things could not best be selected by Franklin on the spot. And when there, he ingeniously added, "You may make acquaintance, and establish correspondences in the bookselling and stationery line." What could be better or more agreeable? Franklin was directed to be ready to go with the *Annis*, the only ship then running, once a year, between London and Philadelphia. But it would be some months before her sailing; so, thinking all the while what a generous friend Sir William, the Governor, was to him, and dreaming, doubtless, about the pleasure he should have in visiting the great metropolis, — the deluded youth continued working with Keimer, keeping his secret to himself, and the splendid fortune that was before him. "My father," perhaps he thought, "is a wise counsellor, but it will be seen, ere long, what an enterprising young man, backed up by a generous friend, can do."

Franklin, however, had his worries. That money of Mr. Vernon's fretted him extremely; it might be called for any moment. He was learning how one grievous mistake may embitter life. With Keimer he lived on agreeable terms. They both loved to argue, and had many disputations. Franklin brought into play his Socratic method, which had wrought such wonders in Boston. It was very effectual with Keimer.

"I had trepanned him so often," says Franklin, "by questions apparently so distant from any point we had in hand, yet by degrees leading to the point, and bringing him into difficulties and contradictions, that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer me the most common question, without asking first, 'What do you intend to infer from that?'"

But Franklin's skill in arguing gave Keimer so high an opinion of his abilities, that he seriously proposed that they should set up a new sect. Keimer was to preach the doctrine, and Franklin was to confound all opponents. When the doctrines came to be stated, as a basis of union, the young Socrates had his objections. He also had some notions of his own, which he would like to introduce.

The printer was a strange man.

"He wore his beard," says Franklin, "at full length, because somewhere in the Mosaic law it is said, '*Thou shalt not mar the corner of thy beard.*' He likewise kept the seventh day, Sabbath; and these two points were essential with him. I disliked both; but agreed to them on condition of his adopting the doctrine of not using animal food. 'I doubt,' said he, 'my constitution will not bear that.' I assured him it would, and that he would be the better for it. He was usually a great eater, and I wished to give myself some diversion, in half-starving him. He consented to try the practice, if I would keep him company. I did so, and we held it for three months. Our provisions were purchased, cooked and brought to us regularly by a woman in the neighborhood, who had a list of forty dishes, which she prepared for us at different times, in which there entered neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. This whim suited me the better at this

time, from the cheapness of it, not costing us above eighteen pence sterling each per week. . . . I went on pleasantly, but poor Keimer suffered grievously, grew tired of the project, longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt, and ordered a roast pig. He invited me and two friends to dine with him; but, it being brought too soon upon the table, he could not resist the temptation, and ate the whole before we came."

Besides attending to business, Franklin, now in his eighteenth year, yielded a little to the promptings of the tender passion. He had made the acquaintance of Miss Read while lodging in her father's house, and the respect he conceived for her had ripened into affection, which he had some reason to believe was reciprocated by the young lady. There is always a prudent person in the way. In the matter of setting up in business it was his father; in the present case, it was Miss Read's mother. The careful lady thought the parties were too young to think of matrimony, at present, especially as one of them was about to take a long voyage. If there should be a marriage, it would better take place after Franklin's return, and he was established in his profession. The young lover conjectured that her expectations as to his success in business were not so sanguine as his own. The mother proved to be in the right.

Among his acquaintances at this time, Franklin particularly mentions three, Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph, "all lovers of reading."

## CHAPTER IX.

*Governor Keith. — Great Promises. — Never Ready. — Franklin sails for England. — No Letters. — Discovers the Deception. — A Stranger in London. — Mr. Denham. — Franklin's Opinion of Sir William Keith. — Ralph Again. — Franklin Finds Employment.*

ALL this while, Franklin was a frequent guest at the Governor's house, who liked the company of the young printer, and was as profuse in promises as ever. The setting him up in business was a fixed thing, and he was to be provided with letters of recommendation to friends in England; and, most important of all, with a letter of credit on London, which should supply the necessary money for the purchase of press, type, paper, etc.

Franklin's faith in his patron never wavered. He was so genial and generous! And yet the letters were never ready when called for at the appointed time. It was the next time, and again the next time, until Franklin found himself on board the vessel without a single letter. The good Governor was extremely busy, but would be at Newcastle before the ship, and then the

letters would be put into his hands. The vessel reached Newcastle, the Governor was at Newcastle, but he was still so busy that he could not see Franklin; the letters would be sent to him on board. He did, however, send his wishes for a prosperous voyage and a speedy return. The ship sailed without Franklin's receiving any communication from his busy friend, and he was "a little puzzled, but still not doubting."

Before leaving Philadelphia, he had formed an engagement with Miss Read, and taken leave of his friends, except Ralph, who had become his fellow-voyager. This unprincipled man, having had some disagreement with his wife's relations, had resolved to leave her, with his child, upon their hands, proposing never to return. Franklin was peculiarly unfortunate in some of his friends; which was partly his own fault.

Franklin found the cabin engaged by strangers, among whom was Mr. Hamilton, a noted lawyer of Philadelphia, so that he and Ralph were forced to put up with a berth in the steerage. Luckily, however, his old friend Col. French having been on board just before they started, and shown him great respect, he and Ralph were invited to come into the cabin, where room had been made by the sudden departure, at Newcastle, of Mr. Hamilton and his son, recalled to Philadelphia on business.

Franklin was anxious about the promised letters, and soon requested the captain to give him, out of the Governor's dispatches, brought on

board, as he presumed, by Col. French, such letters as were to be under his care. But everything had gone into the bag together; before landing in England, Franklin should have what belonged to him. It only remained to wait with patience. The voyage was made pleasant by agreeable company and plentiful stores, notwithstanding bad weather.

And now again for the letters. When the ship came into the channel, the Governor's bag was opened to Franklin's eager inspection. There was no one directed to him, but several bore his name as put under his care. Out of these he selected six or seven, which, by the handwriting, he thought ought to be the promised letters, especially one addressed to the King's printer, and another to a stationer.

The ship reached London, December 24th, 1724. Franklin, now eighteen years of age, was a stranger in the great city, and was not slow in waiting upon the stationer, who came first in his way, delivering his letter as from Governor Keith. "I don't know such a person," he said. Opening the letter, he added, "Oh! this is from Riddlesden. I have lately found him to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letter from him." "So, putting the letter into my hand," says Franklin, "he turned on his heel, and left me to serve some customers."

Franklin's eyes now began to be opened.

"I was surprised," he says, "to find that these were not

the Governor's letters; and, after recollecting and comparing circumstances, I began to doubt his sincerity. I found my friend Denham [a Quaker merchant with whom he had formed an acquaintance during the voyage], and opened the whole affair to him. He let me into Keith's character, told me there was not the least probability that he had written any letters for me; that no one, who knew him, had the smallest dependence on him; and he laughed at the idea of the Governor's giving me a letter of credit, having, as he said, no credit to give. On my expressing some concern about what I should do, he advised me to endeavor getting some employment in the way of my business. 'Among the printers here,' said he, 'you will improve yourself, and, when you return to America, you will set up to great advantage.'"

With regard to his deceiver, Franklin said, with a proper indignation :

"What shall we think of a Governor playing such pitiful tricks, and imposing so grossly on a poor, ignorant boy?"

But, with no common magnanimity, he checks his wrath, and adds :—

"It was a habit he had acquired. He wished to please everybody; and having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good Governor for the people; though not for his constituents, the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of his planning, and passed during his administration."

Riddlesden, referred to above, was a knavish attorney. He had half ruined Miss Read's father, by getting him to be bondsman for him. His letter showed that he had a secret plan, in

which Keith was concerned, to injure Mr. Hamilton; and when this gentleman arrived in England, soon after, Franklin, at Denham's suggestion, thought it proper to put the letter into his hands. It contained information important to him, and from that time, he became a valuable friend to Franklin.

And what does our young hero now think of Sir William?

Here were two poor fellows, Franklin and Ralph, brought face to face with stern necessity. No "letter of credit" gave them access to the Bank of England. No influential friends took them to an open door. They took humble lodgings together in that part of London called Little Britain, at three shillings and sixpence a week, the most they could then afford. It had been better for Franklin to be alone. Collins had been his burden in Philadelphia, and Ralph took that place in London. Ralph had no money, and failed to get employment, as an actor, then as a writer for a paper, or as a copyist; but he could borrow money of Franklin, who had a few pistoles, and who at once got work and wages in a famous printing-house. Franklin was now, as he had always been, industrious, but in other respects his habits were not altogether correct. The influence of his companion was far from good, and he spent with Ralph a good deal of his earnings at the theatre and other places of amusement.

Ralph seems to have forgotten his wife and



child, whom he had meanly deserted, and Franklin, in his turn, forgot his engagement with Miss Read, writing but one letter, and that to let her know that he was not likely to soon return. But he lived to confess his great wrong, and to do what he could to repair it.

Ralph, meanwhile, indulged in gross immorality, which soon involved Franklin in heavier expenses, and brought a stain upon his character. With reference to his course at this period he afterwards wrote, "Another erratum." But Ralph broke friendship with Franklin, who was fortunate to get rid of a companion that had been only a burden and a snare.

## CHAPTER X.

*Relieved of a Burden. — A New Printing-Office. — The Water-American. — Beer-Drinkers. — Initiation-Fee. — Frugal Living. — New Lodgings. — A Catholic Lady. — Wygate. — Denham. — His Proposal to Franklin.*

Relieved of his burden, Franklin now began to think of doing something more than living from hand to mouth, and, in the hope of obtaining better pay, he sought employment in a larger office, with Mr. Watts, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. Here he continued as long as he was in London.

In America he had combined composing and press-work, but now, for the sake of exercise, he worked entirely at the press. He drank water only, while the rest of the workmen, fifty in number, were all great beer-drinkers. They were astonished to see how easily the water-American, as they called him, could carry up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, while none of them could carry more than one in both hands. He was *stronger* than the drinkers of *strong* beer! There was an ale-house boy always on hand to answer calls for drink.

"My companion at the press," says Franklin, "drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with

his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom, but it was necessary, he supposed, to drink *strong* beer, that he might be *strong* to labor. I endeavored to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain, or flour, of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made ; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread ; and therefore if he could eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that vile liquor; an expense I was free from. And thus these poor devils keep themselves always under."

After some weeks, Franklin was transferred to the composing-room. Here an initiation fee of five shillings was demanded, to be expended in drink. Having already paid one to the pressmen, he refused to comply, the master approving of his course. He stood his ground for two or three weeks, but was so much annoyed by a variety of tricks practiced upon him, such as mixing his type, transposing and breaking his matter, when he was out of sight, — the work, they told him, of the chapel-ghost,\* which ever haunted those not regularly admitted to their fraternity, — that at last he paid the score, persuaded of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually.

"I was now," he adds, "on a fair footing with them, and soon acquired considerable influence. I proposed some reasonable changes in their chapel-laws, and carried them

\* A printing-house is called a *chapel* by the workmen.

against all opposition. From my example a great many of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could with me be supplied from a neighboring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz. three half-pence. This was a more comfortable, as well as a cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer. Those who continued sopping with their beer all day, were often, by not paying, out of credit at the ale-house, and used to make interest with me to get beer; their light, as they phrased it, being out. I watched the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engaged for them, having to pay sometimes thirty shillings a week on their accounts."

He was thus in high favor with the workmen, and, from his uncommon quickness in composing, he was much thought of by the master, and received for special work, now and then, extra pay.

He afterwards found nearer lodgings in Duke Street, up three pairs of back stairs, where he was to pay the widow lady who kept the house three shillings and sixpence a week, which, afterwards, from her liking his company, was reduced to one shilling and sixpence. The hostess, who was a Catholic, a convert from Protestantism, was confined to her room by lameness. She was full of interesting anecdotes of people of distinction as far back as the time of Charles the Second, and Franklin found it very agreeable to spend an evening, when she desired it, in her company, their supper consisting of half an an-

chovy each, a small slice of bread and butter, and half a pint of ale between them.

"In the garret of her house," says Franklin, "there lived a maiden lady of seventy, in the most retired manner, of whom my landlady gave me this account : that she was a Roman Catholic, had been sent abroad when young, and lodged in a nunnery with the intent of becoming a nun ; but, the country not agreeing with her, she returned to England, where, there being no nunnery, she had vowed to lead the life of a nun, as near as might be done in those circumstances. Accordingly she had given all her estate to charitable purposes, reserving only twelve pounds a year to live on, and out of this sum she still gave a part in charity, living herself on water-gruel only, and using no fire but to boil it. She had lived many years in that garret, being permitted to remain there gratis by successive Catholic tenants of the house below, as they deemed it a blessing to have her there. A priest visited her, to confess her, every day. 'From this I asked her,' said my landlady, 'how she, as she lived, could possibly find so much employment for a confessor ?' 'Oh,' said she, 'it is impossible to avoid *vain thoughts*.'

"I was permitted once to visit her. She was cheerful and polite, and conversed pleasantly. The room was clean, but had no other furniture than a mattress, a table with a crucifix, and a book, a stool which she gave me to sit on, and a picture over the chimney of St. Veronica displaying her handkerchief, with the miraculous figure of Christ's bleeding face on it, which she explained to me with great seriousness. She looked pale, but was never sick ; and I give it as another instance, on how small an income life and health may be supported."

At Watts', Franklin made the acquaintance of a young printer, named Wygate, who was fond

of books, spoke French, and was a tolerable Latin scholar. Franklin taught him and a friend of his to swim, and by these he was introduced to several gentlemen, whose curiosity had been excited to see some of his feats of activity in the water. He gave them an opportunity one day, and was much flattered by their admiration. Wygate became so much attached to Franklin, that he proposed that they should travel over Europe together, supporting themselves by their business. Franklin was quite inclined to the plan, but his judicious friend Denham advised him rather to return to Philadelphia, which he himself was about resolved to do.

Franklin relates an instance of this man's honesty and integrity. Having failed in business in Bristol, England, he compounded with his creditors to the best of his ability, and went to America. Having there acquired a fortune, he had returned to England. Inviting his creditors to an entertainment, he thanked them for their former leniency; and when they expected nothing but the treat, every guest, after the first course, found under his plate an order on a banker for the full amount due him, with interest.

Mr. Denham was now about to return to his home in Philadelphia, where he intended to open a store, for which he was to take over a large stock of goods. He proposed to Franklin to go with him as his clerk, to keep his books, copy his letters, and attend the store. Before long, he

would send him with a cargo of flour and bread to the West Indies, and procure him profitable commission from others; if he showed capacity for business, he would set him up for himself. Franklin, being now tired of London, and feeling a desire to see Philadelphia again, agreed with Mr. Denham for fifty pounds a year, and as he thought, took a farewell leave of printing. He was now continually engaged with Mr. Denham in purchasing articles and seeing them packed, doing errands, etc. until everything was on board.

Franklin had now spent about a year and a half in London. Most of the time he had been hard at work, and had earned fair wages, but his "friend" Ralph had kept him poor, owing him now twenty-seven pounds, a great sum out of his small earnings. He had been disappointed in the great object of his coming, but he had increased his knowledge of books, and of the world, and had made some very profitable acquaintances. He is to go back about as poor as he came, still as an employee, instead of returning with the outfit of a printing-office to set up as master-printer. Without shame or faint-heartedness, now but twenty years of age, he will try again what diligence in business can accomplish.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Leaves England. — His Journal. — An Adventure. — Playing Cards. — A Dutchman. — Talking to a Foreigner. — A Trial. — A Weary Bird. — Dolphins. — A Shark. — Land. — Cape Henlopen. — Welcomed at Newcastle. — A Happy Day. — At Home.*

Franklin left England for America, on the 23d of July, 1726, sailing from Gravesend. He kept a journal of the voyage. As they passed through the Downs, the next day, he had, as he tells us, one of the pleasantest scenes in the world before him, as he sat upon the quarter-deck.

“’Tis a fine, clear day, and we are going away before the wind with an easy, pleasant gale. We have nearly fifteen sail of ships in sight, and, I may say, in company. On the left hand appears the coast of France at a distance, and on the right is the towered castle of Dover, with the green hills and chalky cliffs of England, to which we must now bid farewell. Albion, farewell !”

The next day they saw the Isle of Wight. On the 27th, the wind blowing very hard, they ran into Spithead, off Portsmouth, where Franklin, with the captain and Mr. Denham, went ashore. Franklin improved the brief opportunity



to look about him. Wherever he went, it was with eyes wide open. His journal gives quite a minute description of Portsmouth, showing the carefulness and accuracy of his observations.

Two days later, the ship lying off Cowes, in the fall of night, Franklin went ashore, and took a four miles walk to Newport, the metropolis, and then a mile further to Carisbrooke, being curious to see the castle in which Charles I. had been confined.

Of a former governor of the island, in King William's time, he says :

“ At his death it appeared he was a great villain, and a great politician; there was no crime so damnable which he would stick at in the execution of his designs; and yet he had the art of covering all so thick, that with almost all men in general, while he lived, he passed for a saint. What surprised me was, that the silly old fellow, the keeper of the castle, who remembered him as Governor, should have so true an idea of his character as I perceived he had. In short, I believe it is impossible for a man, though he has all the cunning of a devil, to live and die a villain, and yet conceal it so well as to carry the name of an honest fellow to the grave with him, but some one, by some accident or other, shall discover him. Truth and sincerity have a certain distinguishing native lustre about them, which cannot be perfectly counterfeited; they are like fire and flames, that cannot be painted.”

The ship stopping the next day at Yarmouth, another little town upon the island, because of the severe westerly wind, our young voyager again went on shore.

During this excursion, he and his companions met with a somewhat sorry adventure. It was in trying to make their way back to the town, from which they had wandered a mile or two. They had headed a creek that runs up one end of the town, and then gone to a place called Fresh-water Church, on the other side of the creek.

"Having stayed here," he says, "some time it grew dark, and my companions were desirous to be gone, lest those whom we had left drinking where we dined in the town, should go on board and leave us. We were told that it was our best way to go straight down to the mouth of the creek, and that there was a ferry boy that would carry us over to the town. When we came to the house the boy whelp was in bed, and refused to rise and put us over; upon which we went down to the waterside, with a design to take his boat, and go over by ourselves. We found it very difficult to get the boat, it being fastened to a stake, and the tide risen near fifty yards beyond it. I stripped all to my shirt to wade up to it; but, missing the causeway, which was under water, I got up to my middle in mud. At last I came to the stake; but, to my great disappointment, found she was locked and chained. I endeavored to draw the staple with one of the thole-pins, but in vain; I tried to pull up the stake, but to no purpose; so that, after an hour's fatigue and trouble in the wet and mud, I was forced to return without the boat.

"We had no money in our pockets, and therefore began to conclude to pass the night in some haystack, though the wind blew very cold and very hard. In the midst of these troubles, one of us recollected that he had a horse-shoe in his pocket, which he found in his walk, and asked me if I could not wrench the staple out with that. I took it, went,

tried and succeeded, and brought the boat ashore to them. Now we rejoiced and all got in, and, when I had dressed myself, we put off. But the worst of all our troubles was to come yet; for, it being high water, and the tide over all the banks, though it was moonlight we could not discern the channel of the creek; but, rowing heedlessly straight forward, when we were got about half way over, we found ourselves aground on a mud bank; and, striving to row her off by putting an oar in the mud, we broke one and there stuck fast, not having four inches water. We were now in the utmost perplexity, not knowing what in the world to do. We could not tell whether the tide was rising or falling, but at length we plainly perceived it was ebb, and we could feel no deeper water within the reach of our oar.

“It was hard to lie in an open boat all night, exposed to the wind and weather; but it was worse to think how foolish we should look in the morning, when the owner of the boat should catch us in that condition, where we must be exposed to the view of all the town. After we had strove and struggled for half an hour and more, we gave all over, and sat down, with our hands before us, despairing to get off; for, if the tide had left us, we had been never the nearer; we must have sat in the boat, as the mud was too deep for us to walk ashore through it, being up to our necks. At last we bethought ourselves of some means of escaping, and two of us stripped and got out, and thereby lightening the boat, we drew her upon our knees near fifty yards, into deeper water; and then with much ado, having but one oar, we got safe ashore under the fort; and, having dressed ourselves, and tied the man’s boat, we went with great joy to the Queen’s Head, where we had left our companions, whom we found waiting for us, though it was very late. Our boat being gone on board, we were obliged to lie ashore all night; and thus ended our walk.”

This was Saturday night; the next morning the boat came off and took them on board. But the ship was detained by adverse winds from day to day. It was not till August 5th that she finally left Cowes.

At last a little incident helped to relieve the dull monotony of the voyage. One of the passengers was complained of for having marked his cards, and a court of justice was called to try him. A Dutchman, who knew not a word of English, deposed, by an interpreter, that, when Franklin's mess was on shore at Cowes, the prisoner at the bar marked all the court cards with a pen. Upon this testimony, Franklin remarks with shrewd humor:

"We are apt to fancy the person that cannot speak intelligibly to us, proportionally stupid in understanding; and, when we speak two or three words of English to a foreigner, it is louder than ordinary, as if we thought him deaf, and that he had lost the use of his ears as well as his tongue. Something like this, I imagine, might be the case of Mr. — (the defendant); he fancied the Dutchman could not see what he was about, because he could not understand English, and therefore boldly did it before his face.

"The evidence being plain and positive, the accused was brought in guilty by the jury. He was sentenced to be carried up to the round-top and made fast there, in view of all the ship's company, during the space of three hours, . . .

. . . and to pay a fine of two bottles of brandy. But, the prisoner resisting authority, and refusing to submit to punishment, one of the sailors stept up aloft and let down a rope to us, which we, with much struggling, made fast about his middle, and hoisted him up into the air, sprawling, by main

force. We let him hang, cursing and swearing, for nearly a quarter of an hour; but at length, he crying out Murder! and looking black in the face, the rope being overtaut about his middle, we thought proper to let him down again; and our mess have excommunicated him till he pays his fine, refusing either to play, eat, drink, or converse with him."

Within less than a week he concluded to pay the fine, and took his former place.

One day, toward night, a little bird alighted on the ship, so weary as to suffer itself to be taken by the hand. The poor wanderer had probably been blown off the coast some two hundred leagues, in thick weather, and could not find its way back again. It was hospitably entertained with food and drink, which it refused. A few days before, one had come on board in similar circumstances, and probably been destroyed by the cat.

At another time they caught a couple of dolphins, and fried them for dinner.

"These fish," says Franklin, "make a glorious appearance in the water; their bodies are of a bright green, mixed with a silver color, and their tails of a shining golden yellow; but all this vanishes presently after they are taken out of their element, and they change all over to a light gray. I observed that cutting off pieces of a just-caught, living dolphin for bait, those pieces did not lose their lustre and fine colors when the dolphin died, but retained them perfectly. Everyone takes notice of that vulgar error of the painters, who always represent this fish monstrously crooked and deformed, when it is, in reality, as beautiful and well-shaped a

fish as any that swims. I cannot think what can be the original of this chimera of theirs, since there is not a creature in nature that in the least resembles their dolphin, unless it proceeded at first from a false imitation of a fish in the posture of leaping, which they have since improved into a crooked monster, with a head and eyes like a bull, a hog's snout, and a tail like a blown tulip."

The dolphins were caught with a hook and line, the bait being a candle with two feathers stuck in it, in imitation of a flying-fish, their common prey. Some which they afterwards took appeared to be very hungry, and snapped at the hook as soon as it touched the water. Inside of one there was found a small dolphin, half-digested. Three of these fish made a dinner for twenty-one persons.

One day, it being very calm and hot, Franklin wished to bathe in the sea, but was deterred by the appearance of a shark.

"The animal," he says, "seemed to be about five feet long, moved round the ship at some distance, in a slow, majestic manner, attended by nearly a dozen pilot-fish, of different sizes, the largest not so big as a small mackerel, and the smallest not bigger than my little finger. Two of these diminutive pilots keep just before his nose, and he seems to govern himself in his motions by their direction; while the rest surround him on every side indifferently. A shark is never seen without a retinue of these, who are his purveyors, discovering and distinguishing his prey for him; while he in return gratefully protects them from the ravenous, hungry dolphin."

At length, on the seventy-ninth day after set-

ting foot on shipboard, one of the company, going after dinner aloft, discerned the long-wished-for object, and cried out "LAND! LAND!"

"In less than an hour," says Franklin, "we could descry it from the deck, appearing like tufts of trees. I could not discern it so soon as the rest; my eyes were dimmed with the suffusion of two small drops of joy. By three, we were run in within two leagues of the land, and spied a small sail standing along shore. We would gladly have spoken with her, for our captain was unacquainted with the coast, and knew not what land it was that we saw. We made all the sail we could to speak with her. We made a signal of distress; but all would not do, the ill-natured dog would not come near us. Then we stood off again till morning, not caring to venture too near."

The next morning the ship stood in again for land, which proved to be Cape Henlopen. About noon the pilot-boat came to meet them. The pilot brought with him about a peck of apples, which, says Franklin, "seemed the most delicious I ever tasted in my life." A fine wind took them up the Delaware more than a hundred miles before ten o'clock. The country appeared "very pleasant to the eye, being covered with woods, except here and there a house or plantation." When the tide turned they cast anchor, about two miles below Newcastle, where they waited for the return tide. The next morning a gentle breeze took them past Newcastle, where the people gave them a salute of welcome. Franklin was in high spirits. The weather was fine, and he was almost home.

"The sun," he says, "enlivens our stiff limbs with his glorious rays of warmth and brightness. The sky looks gay, with here and there a silver cloud. The fresh breezes from the woods refresh us; the immediate prospect of liberty, after so long and irksome confinement, ravishes me. In short, all things conspire to make this the most joyful day I ever knew. As we passed by Chester, some of the company went on shore, impatient once more to tread on *terra firma*, and designing for Philadelphia by land. Four of us remained on board, not caring for the fatigue of travel when we knew the voyage had much weakened us. About eight at night, the wind failing us, we cast anchor at Redbank, six miles from Philadelphia, and thought we must be obliged to lie on board that night; but, some young Philadelphians happening to be out upon their pleasure in a boat, they came on board, and offered to take us up with them; we accepted of their kind proposal, and about ten o'clock landed at Philadelphia (on the 11th of October, 1726), heartily congratulating each other upon our having happily completed so tedious and dangerous a voyage. Thank God!"



## CHAPTER XII.

*In Philadelphia.—A New Governor.—Sir William Keith.—Miss Read.—Franklin in Business.—Mr. Denham.—Sickness.—Out of Business.—Returns to Keimer.—Larger Wages.—The Workmen.—George Webb.—Franklin invents a Mould for casting Types.—Engraving.—Leaves Keimer.—Meredith.—A New Plan.—New Engagement with Keimer.—Printing Paper Money.—Franklin's Inventive Genius.—At Burlington.—A Favorite.—New and Valuable Acquaintances.—Isaac Decow.—A Croaker.—Samuel Nickle.—Letter to his Sister.*

FRANKLIN is once more in Philadelphia, where he finds that "sundry alterations" have occurred. The great promiser and patron is no longer Governor. Franklin met him walking the streets as a common citizen. He seemed a little ashamed at seeing one whom he had treated so shabbily, and passed him without a word. Miss Read, persuaded by her friends, who despaired of Franklin's return, had married a man who proved to be a worthless fellow, and who, a year or two after, ran away for debt, and died in the West Indies. Franklin says that he should have been ashamed at seeing her, but for

her marriage. As this, however, was the consequence of his own most culpable abandonment of her, after their solemn engagement, the want of shame is not at all to his credit. Afterward he viewed his conduct in a juster light, and made what amends he could. As to Keimer, he found him in a more prosperous condition, with a better house, a shop well supplied with stationery, new types, and a number of hands, and with apparently a good run of business.

Franklin's engagement with Mr. Denham had an encouraging beginning. The two were warm friends. They lodged and boarded together; Denham counseled his young clerk as a father, and was in turn respected and beloved. But in a little over three months, the business was interrupted by the severe sickness of both of them. Franklin came near dying, of pleurisy, and Denham's sickness, after holding him a long time, proved fatal. The store was taken into the care of executors, and once more, with a small legacy left by Mr. Denham as a token of kindness, Franklin, now in his twenty-first year, was left to the wide world.

After looking about in vain for employment as a merchant's clerk, Franklin, much against his feelings, accepted an offer of large wages from Keimer. He was to take the management of the printing-house, while Keimer attended to the stationer's shop. He soon learned that Keimer's object in engaging him was to have him train several raw, cheap hands whom he

had in his employ, and that when these were sufficiently instructed, he was to be dismissed. Franklin had the good sense, however, to do his best, and succeeded in due time in making them much better workmen. One of them was Hugh Meredith, a Welsh Pennsylvanian, thirty years of age, bred to country work, an honest, sensible man, fond of reading, but addicted to drink. Another was Stephen Potts, from the country, full of talent and wit, but a little idle. At first they received very small wages, which were to be gradually raised as they improved in their business. Meredith was to work at press, Potts at bookbinding, which Keimer agreed to teach them, though ignorant of both. Then there was a wild Irishman, whose service of four years had been purchased of a captain of a ship, and who was to be made a pressman; but he soon ran away. David Harry was apprentice boy, from the country. Lastly, there was George Webb, an Oxford scholar, whose service Keimer had bought for four years, intending him for a compositor. "It was an odd thing," says Franklin, "to find an Oxford scholar in the situation of a bought servant." He was now but eighteen years of age. According to his own account, he was born in Gloucester, and was educated at a grammar school, where he gained some distinction among the pupils in dramatic performances. He was a member of the Wits' Club, and succeeded in having some of his pieces in prose and poetry printed in the Gloucester newspapers.

From there he went to the University, where he staid but a year, having but one ambition, to be a play-actor. With his quarterly allowance of fifteen shillings, which he put in his pocket instead of paying his debts, he walked out of town, one day, hid his scholar's gown in a furze bush, and made his way on foot to London. Having no friends to advise him, he here fell into bad company, soon parted with his money, and, finding no way of access to the players, was forced to pawn his clothes for bread. Walking the street, very hungry, and not knowing what to do with himself, he fell an easy prey to a crimp, who was decoying persons into bond-service, in America. In his desperation he at once signed the papers, was put on shipboard, and bid adieu to England, without sending a line to his friends. "He was," says Franklin, "lively, witty, good-natured, and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree."

Franklin lived very agreeably with them all, and was well-treated by Keimer. His debt to Vernon, however, was a perpetual anxiety, though fortunately payment was not demanded.

As suitable types were often wanting, and could not be procured in America, Franklin contrived a mould for casting letters. He also turned his hand to engraving, made the ink, was warehouseman, and, in short, quite a *factotum*.

But as the other hands, whose wages were

small, improved in skill under Franklin's instruction, he found that his own services were becoming less important, or, rather, that his high wages were growing to be a burden. Gradually Keimer became captious and fault-finding. Franklin, however, took it patiently, till at length a trifle separated them.

"A great noise," says Franklin, "happening near the court-house, I put my head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer, being in the street, looked up and saw me, called out to me in a loud voice and angry tone to mind my business; adding some reproachful words, which nettled me the more for their publicity. . . . He came up immediately into the printing-house, continued the quarrel, high words passed on both sides, he gave me the quarter's warning we had stipulated, expressing a wish that he had not been obliged to so long a warning. I told him his wish was unnecessary, for I would leave him that instant; and so, taking my hat, walked out of doors, desiring Meredith, whom I saw below, to take care of some things I left, and bring them to my lodgings."

In the evening he talked over the affair with Meredith, who told him that Keimer's business was in a very bad way, so that he must soon fail, which would leave a vacancy for somebody. He advised Franklin to set up for himself, and when the want of capital was objected, he said that his father, who had a high opinion of Franklin, would advance him money if he would enter into partnership with him (Meredith). His engagement with Keimer would be out in the spring, by which time a press and types might be

obtained from London. And as he knew he was a poor workman, he would set Franklin's skill against the capital he would furnish, and they would share the profits equally.

Franklin was pleased with the plan, and Meredith's father, who was then in town, also approving of it, the connection was formed. The father was the more ready for this arrangement, because of Franklin's influence over his son, in persuading him to abstain long from drink, and his hope that the wretched habit might be entirely broken up when the two came to be closely connected.

An order was sent to England for a press and types, and Franklin sought temporary work at the other printer's house; the new plan being meanwhile kept a secret. But there was no vacancy at Bradford's. In a few days, however, Keimer, whose self-interest made it easy for him to make, as to break, friendship, sent a very civil message to Franklin that friends should not part for a few words, the effect of sudden passion, and wishing him to return. He had a job in prospect, to print some paper money in New Jersey, which would require cuts and various types that Franklin only could supply. His inventive faculty was of great service to him.

"When he was young in business," says Watson, "and stood in need of sundry articles in the line of his province as a printer, he had the ingenuity to make them for himself. In this way he founded letters of lead, engraved various

printing ornaments, cut wood-cuts, made printer's ink, engraved copper-plate vignettes, and made his plate-press."

Meredith, who was still at Keimer's, and who wanted Franklin's instructions, persuaded him to return. He came, contrived a copper-plate press, the first seen in the country, and cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. Keimer and Franklin went to Burlington, where the latter successfully executed the job, and the former received so large a sum for the work as to be able to hold his head above water a while longer.

At Burlington, where they continued three months, Franklin, now a young man of twenty-one, intelligent and well-bred, made the acquaintance of many of the principal people of the province. They invited him to their houses, introduced him to their friends, and showed him much civility. Poor Keimer, though the head man in the business, was quite neglected.

"He was," says Franklin, "an odd creature, ignorant of common life, slovenly to extreme dirtiness, fond of widely opposing received opinions, enthusiastic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal."

Among Franklin's new acquaintances were the Secretary of the Province, several members of the Assembly, and the Surveyor-general, Isaac Decow.

"The latter," he says, "was a shrewd, sagacious old man, who told me that he began for himself, when young, by wheeling clay for the brickmaker, learned to write after he

was of age, carried the chain for surveyors, who taught him surveying, and he had now by his industry acquired a good estate; and, said he, 'I foresee that you will soon work this man out of his business, and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia.' "

Soon after Franklin's return to the city, the new types arrived from London. Having settled with Keimer, Franklin and Meredith rented a house near the market, and commenced business. To lessen the rent, which was twenty-four pounds a year, they let part of the building to a man and his family, with whom they were to board. The press was scarcely in order, when a small job brought them in five shillings; which, says Franklin, "being our first fruits, and coming so seasonably" [when all their cash was expended in starting the business], "gave me more pleasure than any crown I have since earned." And he adds:

"The gratitude I felt towards House" [who brought the order], "has made me often more ready, than perhaps I otherwise should have been, to assist young beginners."

Franklin had warm and influential friends, who encouraged him in his new enterprise, but at least one friend of a more doubtful character.

"There are croakers," says Franklin, "in every country, always boding its ruin. Such a one there lived in Philadelphia; a person of note, an elderly man with a wise look and a very grave manner of speaking; his name was Samuel Nickle. The gentleman, a stranger to me, stopped me one day at my door, and asked me if I was the young man who had lately opened a printing-house? Being answered in the



affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the people already half bankrupts, or near being so; all the appearances of the contrary, such as new buildings and the rise of rents, being to his certain knowledge fallacious; for they were in fact among the things that would ruin us. Then he gave me such a detail of misfortunes now existing, or that were soon to exist, that he left me half melancholly. Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This person continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim in the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began croaking."

Franklin's youngest and favorite sister, Jane, was now about fifteen years old. Franklin sent her the following letter, under date of January 6, 1726.

"DEAR SISTER,

"I am highly pleased with the account Captain Freeman gives me of you. I always judged by your behavior when a child, that you would make a good, agreeable woman, and you know you were ever my peculiar favorite. I have been thinking what would be a suitable present for me to make, and for you to receive, as I hear you are grown a celebrated beauty. I had almost determined on a tea-table; but when I considered that the character of a good housewife was far preferable to that of being only a pretty gentlewoman, I concluded to send you a *spinning-wheel*, which I hope you will accept as a small token of my sincere love and affection.

“Sister, farewell, and remember that modesty, as it makes the most homely virgin amiable and charming, so the want of it infallibly renders the most perfect beauty disagreeable and odious. But when that brightest of female virtues shines among other perfections of body and mind in the same person, it makes the woman more lovely than an angel. Excuse this freedom, and use the same with me.

“I am, dear Jenny,

“Your loving brother,

“B. FRANKLIN.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The Junto — Its members — Queries — Terms of Admission — Origin of American Philosophical Society. — His Diligence. — Dr. Baird.*

IN the preceding autumn, Franklin had formed "most of his ingenious acquaintances into a club for mutual improvement," which was called the JUNTO.

"We met," he says, "on Friday evenings. The members, in turn, were to propose for discussion questions upon Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, and once in three months each one was to read an original essay upon any subject he pleased. They were to have only in view the discovery of truth; and all violations of moderation and courtesy in debate were made subject to a small fine."

Franklin says, that the long continuance of the club was largely owing to the care with which the members maintained the proprieties of debate, and the attention which they gave to reading upon the several subjects which came under discussion.

Among the rules of the Junto were the following, which show the philosophical and practical mind of Franklin; and they are certainly remarkable for a young man of twenty-two:

"Have you read over these queries this morning, in order

to consider what you might have to offer the Junto touching any one of them, viz. :

1. Have you met with anything in the author you last read remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto? particularly in history, morality, poetry, physic, travels, mechanic arts, and other parts of knowledge?

2. What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?

3. Hath any citizen, in your knowledge, failed in his business lately, and what have you heard of the cause?

4. Have you lately heard of any citizens thriving well, and by what means?

6. Do you know of a fellow citizen who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise and imitation; or who has lately committed an error, proper for us to be warned against and avoid?

7. What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard, of imprudence, of passion, of moderation, or of any other virtue?

9. Have you, or any of your acquaintances, been lately sick or wounded? If so, what remedies were used, and what were their effects?"

10. Whom do you know that are shortly going voyages or journeys, if one should have occasion to send by them?

11. Do you think of anything at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to *mankind*, to their country, to their friends, or to themselves?

12. Hath any deserving stranger arrived in town since last meeting, that you have heard of? And what have you observed of his character or merits? And whether, think you, it lies in the power of the Junto to oblige him, or encourage him as he deserves?

13. Do you know of any deserving young beginner lately

set up, whom it lies in the power of the Junto anyway to encourage?

14. Have you lately observed any defect in the laws of your *country*, of which it would be proper to move the Legislature for an amendment? Or do you know of any beneficial law that is wanting?"

This club was not only an important means of intellectual and moral improvement to its members generally, but was also a great help to Franklin in his business. Every member recommended him for his skill and efficiency, and Breitnal, in particular, procured for him from the Quakers the printing of a portion of their history, the rest of the work being in Keimer's hands. It was a folio, with long notes. Franklin set up a sheet a day, Meredith doing the press-work, and it was often eleven at night, and sometimes later, when Franklin had distributed his types for the next day's stint. The little jobs sent in by other friends, now and then, compelled them to work all the harder to complete their assigned task; but so determined was Franklin to do his sheet a day, that, having one night accidentally broken his forms and reduced his pages to *pi*, he immediately distributed his types, and composed it all over again before he went to bed.

Such remarkable industry gave the new firm character and credit. Failure was indeed predicted by many of the merchants, at their every-night club, from there being two other printers in the place; but Dr. Baird, a Scotch gentleman, gave a contrary opinion. "For," said he,

“the industry of that Franklin is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind ; I see him still at work when I go home from the club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed.”

And this opinion turned the tide in his favor. Franklin here modestly remarks :

“I mention this industry more particularly and more freely, though it seems to be talking in my own praise, that those of my posterity who shall read it, may know the use of that virtue, when they see its effects in my favor throughout this relation.”

The time is at hand when the printer will become a publisher and editor of a newspaper. His plan was interrupted for a season by his inadvertently betraying his secret. George Webb, the young Oxford scholar, and also a member of the Junto, having purchased his time of Keimer by the help of a female friend, now came to offer himself as a journeyman to Franklin and Meredith. They could not then employ him, but Franklin let him know that he soon intended to begin a new paper, and might then have work for him. Bradford's paper, he said, was a paltry thing, and yet profitable ; so that a good newspaper could scarcely fail of encouragement. “You will not mention this,” said he ; but the mean fellow told it to Keimer, who immediately put out proposals for one himself, offering employment to Webb. Franklin was vexed at this, and not being yet ready to commence his

own paper, he and Breitnal wrote a series of amusing pieces for Bradford's paper, which served to draw public attention in that direction, and afforded an opportunity of burlesquing and ridiculing Keimer's proposals. He began his paper, however, but after a trial of nine months, with ninety subscribers, he offered to sell out for a small sum. Franklin took the paper off his hands, and made it in a few years very profitable. The paper was called *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, and Franklin and Meredith began with No. 40, September 25th, 1729, Franklin being within about three months of being twenty-four years of age.

An oft-repeated anecdote of Franklin exhibits his fearless honesty.

"Soon after the establishment of his new paper," says Sparks, "he found occasion to remark with some degree of freedom on the public conduct of one or two persons of high standing in Philadelphia. This course was disapproved by some of his patrons, who sought an opportunity to convey to him their views on the subject, and what they represented to be the opinion of his friends. He listened patiently, and replied by requesting that they would favor him with their company at supper, and bring with them the other gentlemen who had expressed dissatisfaction. The time arrived, and the guests assembled. He received them cordially, and listened again to their friendly reproofs of his editorial conduct. At length supper was announced; but, when the guests had seated themselves around the table, they were surprised to see nothing before them but two puddings, made of coarse meal, called *sawdust-puddings*, in the common phrase, and a stone pitcher filled with water. He helped

them all, and then applied himself to his own plate, partaking freely of the repast, and urging his friends to do the same. They taxed their politeness to the utmost, but all in vain; their appetites refused obedience to the will. Perceiving their difficulty, Franklin at last arose and said: *'My friends, anyone who can subsist upon sawdust-pudding and water, as I can, needs no man's patronage.'* "

Franklin was held responsible for whatever appeared in the paper, as in fact he was, the incapacity and intemperance of Meredith throwing the whole management upon the enterprising and sober partner.

And yet Franklin was prudent and honorable in the conduct of his newspaper, as well as independent.

"I carefully excluded," he says, "all libelling and personal abuse. . . . Whenever I was solicited to insert anything of that kind, and the writers pleaded, as they generally did, the liberty of the press; and that a newspaper was like a stage-coach, in which anyone who would pay had a right to a place, my answer was, that I would print the piece separately, if desired, . . . but that I would not take upon me to spread his detraction, and that, having contracted with my subscribers to furnish them with what might be either useful or entertaining, I could not fill their papers with private altercations, in which they had no concern, without doing them manifest injustice."



## CHAPTER XIV.

*His Newspaper Prospers. — Obtains the Public Printing. — Hears from Mr. Vernon. — A Difficulty. — Fear of Failure. — Trouble from Meredith. — Separation. — Relief from Friends. Discussions in the Junto. — Demand for Paper Money. — Writes on the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency. — Prints the Money. — Adds a Stationer's Shop. — His Business Principles. — Uses a Wheelbarrow. — Keimer goes to Barbadoes. — Mr. Bradford the only Rival. — Franklin's Method of Resentment. — Thinks of Matrimony. — Mrs. Godfrey as a Matchmaker. "A Deserving Girl." — Failure of the Plan. — Thinks of Miss Read. — Marriage. — Letter to Mr. Mecom. — Remedy for Cancer.*

The paper continued to prosper. "One of the first good effects," says Franklin, "of my having learned a little to scribble." His other business also increased, the leading men, Mr. Hamilton particularly, giving him patronage and encouragement. Bradford still had the job of printing the votes and laws and other public matter; but, having printed in a slovenly manner an address of the House to the Governor,

which Franklin's press immediately issued elegantly and correctly, a copy being sent to every member, he lost the public printing the next year.

But an indiscretion of former years came to trouble him. Mr. Vernon put Franklin in mind of the debt he owed him, though he did not press the payment. Franklin wrote a letter acknowledging his friend's long forbearance, and asking a little further indulgence, which was generously granted.

"As soon as I was able," he says, "I paid the principal with the interest, and many thanks; so that *erratum* was in some degree corrected."

Franklin never forgot Mr. Vernon's kindness, and many years afterwards, while he was minister plenipotentiary at the Court of France, he had the great pleasure of rendering valuable service to a young man, a descendant of Mr. Vernon, who spent some time in that country.

"But now," he says, "another difficulty came upon me, which I had never the least reason to suspect. Mr. Meredith's father, who was to have paid for our printing-house, . . . was able to advance only one hundred pounds currency, which had been paid; and a hundred more were due to the merchant, who grew impatient and sued us all. We gave bail, but saw that, if the money could not be raised in time, the suit must soon come to a judgment and execution, and our hopeful prospects must, with us, be ruined; as the press and letters must be sold for payment, perhaps at half price.

"In this distress two true friends, whose kindness I have

never forgotten, nor ever shall forget while I can remember anything, came to me separately, unknown to each other, and, without any application from me, offered, each of them, to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that should be practicable; but they did not like my continuing the partnership with Meredith, who, as they said, was often seen drunk in the streets, playing at low games in alehouses, much to our discredit.

“These two friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace. I told them I could not propose a separation, while any prospect remained of the Merediths’ fulfilling their part of the engagement; because I thought myself under great obligations to them for what they had done, and would do if they could; but, if they finally failed in their performance, and our partnership must be dissolved, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friend.

“Thus the matter rested for some time, when I said to my partner, ‘Perhaps your father is dissatisfied with the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me, what he would for you. If that is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business.’ ‘No,’ said he, ‘my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him further. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclined to go with them, and follow my old employment; you may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you, return to my father the hundred pounds he has advanced, pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands.’

"I agreed to this proposal; it was drawn up in writing, signed and sealed immediately. I gave him what he demanded, and he went soon after to Carolina, whence he sent me next year two long letters, containing the best account that had been given of that country, the climate, the soil and husbandry, for in those matters he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers, and they gave great satisfaction to the public.

"As soon as he was gone I recurred to my two friends, and because I would not give an unkind preference to either, I took half of what each had offered and I wanted of one, and half of the other; paid off the company's debts, and went on with the business in my own name."

This was in July, 1780, over nine months from their commencing the paper.

The discussions in the Junto, on subjects of public interest, were an excellent training for Franklin as an editor. He was prepared to write upon such matters in an instructive and forcible manner, which gave weight to his opinions and character to his paper.

About the time that the *Gazette* passed into his sole management, a general demand arose for more paper money. There was not enough for the transaction of business; there being only fifteen thousand pounds in the provinces, and that soon to be taken out of the currency. The wealthy inhabitants, who considered the interests of creditors, favored only a specie currency, fearing the disastrous results of a new paper issue, as in New England. Franklin took the other side,

"being persuaded," he says, "that the first small sum

struck in 1723 had done much good by increasing the trade, employment, and number of inhabitants in the province; since I now saw all the old houses inhabited, and many new ones building; whereas, I remembered well, when I first walked about the streets of Philadelphia, eating my roll, I saw many of the houses in Walnut Street, with bills on their doors, 'To be Let;' and many likewise in other streets; which made me think the inhabitants of the city were one after another deserting it."

He accordingly wrote and printed an anonymous pamphlet entitled, "The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency," which had such an influence as to carry the point in the Assembly. Franklin was rewarded for his service by having awarded to him the very profitable job of printing the money; another advantage, he says, gained by his ability to write. In the present instance, it is not altogether improbable that the expectation of printing the bills had some influence on his opinion. Through his friend Hamilton, Franklin obtained the printing of the New Jersey paper money, and also of the laws and votes of that province.

To his printing-house he added a small stationer's shop, which increased his profits. He now began to pay off the debt he had incurred for the printing-house.

This prosperity came from hard work, honesty and frugality, and a spirit of enterprise, which characterized all his transactions. He took pains, in order to secure his credit and character as a tradesman, not only *to be* industrious and frugal, but *to appear* so.

"I dressed plain," he says, "and was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, was private, and gave no scandal; and, to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores, through the streets, on a wheelbarrow. Thus, being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on prosperously. In the meantime, Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forced to sell his printing-house to satisfy his creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some years, in very poor circumstances."

Keimer's apprentice, David Harry, bought his materials, and set up business. Franklin feared a powerful rival, and proposed a partnership, which offer was scornfully declined, fortunately for him.

"He was," says Franklin, "very proud, dressed like a gentleman, lived expensively, took much diversion and pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his business; upon which all business left him; and, finding nothing to do, he followed his old master to Barbadoes, taking the printing-house with him. There this apprentice employed his former master as a journeyman; they quarrelled often, and Harry went continually behindhand; and at length was obliged to sell his types, and return to country work in Pennsylvania."

Franklin had now but one rival, old Mr. Bradford; but this rival was rich and easy, attending to his business with a slack hand, having however, one important advantage over his young compet-

itor, he held the post-office. This was thought to give him special facilities for obtaining news, and for circulating advertisements. Franklin did not, indeed, depend wholly on private means for distributing his paper; he received and sent papers by the post, bribing the post-riders, who took them without Bradford's knowledge; but the public did not understand this. Bradford's meanness in forbidding him the use of the post-office awakened Franklin's resentment; but he says: "I thought so meanly of the practice that, when I afterwards came into his situation, I took care never to imitate it;" a golden revenge.

His thoughts were now turned to matrimony; in the first place, by a match-maker, no other than Mrs. Godfrey. She thought it high time the promising young printer and editor was married, and kindly undertook to manage a match with a relative of hers, a "deserving girl;" and, as Mrs. Godfrey took frequent opportunities of bringing them together, the courtship became quite a serious affair. The old folks encouraged him onward by often inviting him to supper, and then leaving the couple together. Franklin found it was time to explain. He was not, it would appear, disinclined to an engagement, but his passion was not so fervent as to exclude prudential considerations. He had an interview with good Mrs. Godfrey, and let her know the terms and conditions of marriage. He was in debt for the printing-house a hundred

pounds. He would expect from the parents of the lady that sum. Mrs. Godfrey bore the message to the parties concerned, who returned word that they had no such sum to spare. Franklin sent a second message; they could mortgage their house in the loan-office. Some days passed before an answer came to this proposal, and it was, that they did not approve the match; they had made inquiry of Bradford, who informed them that the printing-business was not a profitable one; that the types would soon wear out, and more would be wanted; and that Keimer and Harry had failed, one after the other, a fate that would probably soon overtake Franklin. The result was, he was forbidden the house, and the daughter was shut up. Thus ended the affair, much to Franklin's disgust; though Mrs. Godfrey afterwards brought more favorable accounts of the disposition of the parents, and sought to draw him on again. He declared positively, however, that he would have nothing more to do with the family. This awakened the ire of the Godfreys, who soon quit the house; and Franklin prudently resolved to take no more inmates.

But his mind had now been turned toward marriage, and he looked about him for a suitable helpmate, and made overtures in several directions, but without success. His business was thought a poor one. He might, indeed, have found a wife with money, which he deemed quite desirable, but not one who would in other respects have suited him. Parents who had



money and agreeable daughters seem to have looked coldly upon his advances.

Pity, it is said, is akin to love. It was so in Franklin's case. A sense of the great wrong he had done to Miss Read moved his repentant heart to commiserate her lonely condition. She was, he frankly tells us, "generally dejected, seldom cheerful, and avoided company."

Franklin had kept up his acquaintance with the family, and had often been invited to their house, and consulted in their affairs. He now considered his giddiness and inconstancy when in London as in a great degree the cause of her unhappiness; "though the mother," he remarks, "was good enough to think the fault more her own than mine, as she had prevented our marrying before I went thither, and persuaded the other match in my absence."

Their mutual affection was revived; but there were now great objections to the union. The person whom she had married was perhaps alive, and though he was said to have a previous wife still living in England, yet certainty could not be arrived at, owing to the distance. Besides, he had left debts behind him, which, in case of his death, Franklin might be called upon to pay. But love and pity triumphed over all difficulties, and they were married, September 1st, 1730, when he was nearly twenty-five years of age. "Thus," says Franklin, "I corrected that great *erratum* as well as I could." The marriage was a fortunate one, his wife proving "a good and

faithful helpmate," assisting him much by attending to the shop; and there being a mutual endeavor to make each other happy.

It was while these love affairs were going on, that Franklin wrote to his sister Jane, now Mrs. Mecom. It might be expected that he would say something to her about a matter which so deeply concerned him, but he was silent; and indeed, nothing was then settled. But he mentioned a remedy for cancer, a disease, which, "is often thought incurable."

"Yet we have here in town," he writes, "a kind of shell made of some wood, cut at a proper time, by some man of great skill (as they say), which has done wonders in that disease among us, being worn for some time on the breast. I am not apt to be superstitiously fond of believing such things, but the instances are so well attested as sufficiently to convince the most incredulous.

"This, if I have interest enough to procure, as I think I have, I will borrow for a time, and send it to you; and hope the doctors will at least allow the experiment to be tried."

And this from Benjamin Franklin! But then he was only a young man of twenty-four.

He did not forget his parents:

"You have mentioned," he says, "nothing in your letter of our dear parents; but I conclude they are well, because you say nothing to the contrary."

## CHAPTER XV.

*Book-sellers.—A Library.—Readers of Books in Philadelphia Public Library.—How he obtained Subscribers.—Standing before Kings.—Improved Circumstances.—A Good Wife.—A China Bowl and Silver Spoon.—Form of Prayer.—Plan of Moral Perfection.—Catalogue of Moral Virtues.—Speckled Axe.—A Prayer.—Temperance and other Virtues.—On Humility.—On Pride.—Good Resolutions.—A United Party for Virtue.—A Creed.*

AT the time Franklin established himself in Philadelphia, there was not a good book-seller's shop in any one of the colonies south of Boston.

"In New York and Philadelphia, the printers were indeed," he says, "stationers, but they sold only paper, almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who loved reading were obliged to send for their books from England; the members of the Junto had each a few."

He proposed that the members should bring their books into the little room of Mr. Grace's, where the club was accustomed to meet, that they might be consulted during the discussions, or borrowed to read at home. This plan continued about a year, and was then given up.

"Finding," says Franklin, "the advantage of this little collection, I proposed to render the benefit from the books more common, by commencing a public subscription library,"—his first project of a public nature. He drew up a plan and rules, which he had put in the form of articles of agreement by a skillful conveyancer. Each subscriber was to pay down a certain sum for the first purchase of the books, and an annual contribution for increasing them.

"So few," he says, "were the readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the majority of us so poor, that I was not able with great industry to find more than fifty persons, mostly young tradesmen, willing for this purpose to pay down forty shillings each, and ten shillings per annum. With this little sum we began. The books were imported; the library was opened one day in the week for lending them to the subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned. The institution soon manifested its utility, was imitated by other towns, and in other provinces. The libraries were augmented by donations; reading became fashionable; some people, having no public amusements to direct their attention from study, became better acquainted with books; and in a few years were observed by strangers to be better informed and more intelligent than people of the same rank generally are in their countries.

"When we were about to sign the above-mentioned articles, which were binding on us, our heirs, etc., for fifty years, Mr. Brackden, the scrivener, said to us, 'You are youngmen, but it is scarcely probable that any of you will live to see the expiration of the term fixed in the instrument.' A number of us, however, are yet living, fifty three years after, in 1784; but the instrument was after a few

years [in 1742] rendered null by a charter that incorporated and gave perpetuity to the company."

Franklin's name stands first on the list of the persons who applied for the charter. The library is at present one of the largest in the country. In 1789, a year before his death, a spacious and elegant building was erected to contain it. In a niche in front is a marble statue of the founder, executed in Italy.

Franklin's peculiar character appears in the method he employed to obtain subscriptions, and in his remarks about it.

"The objections and reluctances I met with," he says, "made me soon feel the impropriety of presenting one's self as the proposer of any useful project, that might be supposed to raise one's reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's neighbors, where one has need of their assistance to accomplish that project. I therefore put myself as much as I could out of sight, and stated it as a scheme of a *number of friends*, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading. In this way my affair went on more smoothly, and I ever after practiced it on such occasions; and, from my frequent successes, can heartily recommend it. The present little sacrifice of your vanity will afterward be amply repaid. If it remains awhile uncertain to whom the merit belongs, some one more vain than yourself may be encouraged to claim it, and then even envy will be disposed to do you justice, by plucking those assumed feathers, and restoring them to their right owner.

"This library afforded the means of improvement by constant study, for which I set apart an hour or two each day; and thus repaired in some degree the loss of the learned education my father once intended me for. Reading was the

only amusement I allowed myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolics of any kind; and my industry in my business continued as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was in debt for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated; and I had two competitors to contend with for business, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances however grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his restrictions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, *Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men*, I thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encouraged me; though I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before kings*, which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before five, and even had the honor of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

“We have an English proverb that says, *He that would thrive, must ask his wife*. It was lucky for me that I had one as much disposed to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-maker, etc. We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was for a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a two-penny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make progress, in spite of principle; being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three and twenty shillings; for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his

neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house; which afterwards, in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually and several hundred pounds in value."

The second year of his married life was brightened by a joyful event, the birth of a son, and, as it proved, the only son by this marriage. He was named Francis Folger. We shall have occasion to speak again of this boy.

Some years before, Franklin had composed a small liturgy, or form of prayer; which he afterwards neglected. He now returned to the use of it, and became really in earnest to correct certain bad habits in which he had indulged. The prayer was as follows:

"That I may be preserved from atheism, impiety, and profaneness, and, in my address to Thee, carefully avoid irreverence and ostentation, formality and odious hypocrisy,  
—Kelp me, O Father!

"That I may be loyal to my prince, and faithful to my country, careful for its good, valiant in its defence, and obedient to its laws, abhorring treason as much as tyranny,  
—Help me, O Father!

"That I may to those above me be dutiful, humble and submissive; avoiding pride, disrespect, and contumacy,—  
Help me, O Father!

"That I may to those below me be gracious, condescending, and forgiving, using clemency, protecting innocent distress, avoiding cruelty, harshness, and oppression, insolence, and unreasonable severity, — Help me, O Father!

"That I may refrain from calumny and detraction; that I may abhor and avoid deceit and envy, fraud, flattery, and hatred, malice, lying, and ingratitude,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may be sincere in friendship, faithful in trust, and impartial in judgment, watchful against pride, and against anger (that momentary madness),—Help me, O Father!

"That I may be just in all my dealings, temperate in my pleasures, full of candor and ingenuousness, humanity, and benevolence,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may be grateful to my benefactors, and generous to my friends, exercising charity and liberality to the poor, and pity to the miserable,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may possess integrity and evenness of mood, resolution in difficulties, and fortitude under affliction; that I may be punctual in performing my promises, peaceable and prudent in my behavior,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may have tenderness for the weak, and reverent respect for the ancient; that I may be kind to my neighbors, good-natured to my companions, and hospitable to strangers,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may be averse to craft and overreaching, abhor, extortion, perjury, and every kind of wickedness,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may be honest and open-hearted, gentle, merciful, and good, cheerful in spirit, rejoicing in the good of others,—Help me, O Father!

"That I may have a constant regard to honor and probity that I may possess a perfect innocence and a good conscience, and at length become truly virtuous and magnanimous,—Help me, good God: help me, O Father!

"And, forasmuch as ingratitude is one of the most odious of vices, let me not be unmindful gratefully to acknowledge the favors I receive from Heaven.

#### THANKS.

"For peace and liberty, for food and raiment, for corn, and wine, and milk, and every kind of healthful nourishment,—Good God, I thank thee!



"For the common benefits of air and light; for useful fire and delicious water,—Good God, I thank thee!

"For knowledge, and literature and every useful art; for my friends and their prosperity, and for the fewness of my enemies,—My good God, I thank thee!

"For all thy innumerable benefits; for life, and reason, and the use of speech; for health, and joy, and every pleasant hour,—Good God, I thank thee!"

Indeed, he went so far as to conceive "the bold and arduous project of arriving at *moral perfection*."

"I wished," he says, "to live without committing any fault at any time, and to conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company, might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not *always* do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found," he adds, "I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my attention was taken up, and care employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependance on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct."

He therefore formed a catalogue of the moral virtues, to the number of thirteen; Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquility, Charity, and Humility. He resolved to take one of these at a time, proceeding to

another when he had become master of what preceeded. Order, he tells us, gave him the most trouble.

"I had not been early accustomed to *method*; and this article, therefore, cost me much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect. Like the man, who, in buying an axe of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him, if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the axe hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on; and at length would take his axe as it was, without further grinding. 'No,' said the smith, 'turn on, turn on, we shall have it bright by and by; as yet it is only speckled.' 'Yes,' said the man, 'but *I think I like a speckled axe best.*' And I believe this may have been the case with many, who, having for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that '*a speckled axe is best*'."

But he adds, that, though he fell far short of the perfection he was ambitious of obtaining, yet, by the endeavor, he was a better and a happier man than he would otherwise have been.

To aid his moral improvement, he made a little book, allotting a page to each of the virtues. He divided each page with red ink into seven columns, one for each day of the

week, crossing these columns with thirteen red lines, for the several virtues, which were written in the margin. A little black spot marked every fault he found he had committed respecting any virtue on a particular day.

(FORM OF THE PAGES.)

**TEMPERANCE.**

	<i>SUN.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>T.</i>	<i>W.</i>	<i>T.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>S.</i>
<i>TEM.</i>							
<i>SIL.</i>	*	*		*		*	
<i>ORD.</i>		*			*	*	*
<i>RES.</i>		*				*	
<i>FRU.</i>		*				*	
<i>IND.</i>			*			*	
<i>SINC.</i>							
<i>JUS.</i>							
<i>MOD.</i>							
<i>CLEA.</i>							
<i>TRAN.</i>							
<i>CHAR.</i>							
<i>HUM.</i>							

"Conceiving," he says, "God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit his assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefixed to my tables of examination, for daily use:

"O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolution to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children, as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me.'"

Franklin remarks, that in undertaking to carry out his plan, he was surprised to find how much fuller of faults he was than he had imagined, but that he had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish.

"It may be well," he added, late in life, "my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *Temperance* he ascribes his long continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to *Industry* and *Frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned. To *Sincerity* and *Justice*, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employments conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect states he was able to acquire them, all that evenness

of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his young acquaintances." He also remarks that "no qualities are so likely to make a poor man's fortune, as those of *probity* and *integrity*."

The last virtue in his list, *Humility*, was added at the suggestion of a Quaker friend. He "kindly" told Franklin that he was generally thought proud, that his pride showed itself frequently in conversation, and that he was not content with being in the right when discussing any point, but was overbearing and rather insolent, of which several instances were given.

"I cannot boast," he says, "of much success in acquiring the *reality* of this virtue, but I had a good deal with regard to the appearance of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. . . . When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition; and in answering I began by observing, that, in certain cases or circumstances, his opinion would be right, but in the present case there *appeared* or *seemed to me* some difference, etc. I soon found the advantage of this change in my manner; the conversations I engaged in went on more pleasantly. The modest way in which I proposed my opinions, procured them a readier reception and less contradiction; I had less mortification when I was found to be in the wrong; and I more easily prevailed with others to give up their mistakes and join with me, when I happened to be in the right. . . .

"And to this habit (after my character of integrity) I think it principally owing, that I had early so much weight

with my fellow citizens, when I proposed new institutions or alterations in the old; and so much influence in public councils, when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my point.

"In reality," he adds, "there is perhaps no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as *Pride*. Disguise it, struggle with it, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see, perhaps, often in this history. For, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be *proud of my humility*."

To the plan given above for the cultivation of the virtues, may properly be added some resolutions which he made about the same time, to assist him in living "in all respects like a rational creature:":

"1. It is necessary for me to be extremely frugal for some time, till I have paid what I owe.

"2. To endeavor to speak truth in every instance, to give nobody expectations that are not likely to be answered, but aim at sincerity in every word and action; the most amiable excellence in a rational being.

"3. To apply myself industriously to whatever business I take in hand, and not divert my mind from my business by any foolish project of suddenly growing rich; for industry and patience are the surest means of plenty.

"4. I resolve to speak ill of no man whatever, not even in a matter of truth; but rather by some means excuse the faults I hear charged upon others, and, upon proper occasions, speak all the good I know of everybody."

Franklin not only formed a plan for personal

improvement, but also a scheme of wider scope, no less than that of a *United Party for Virtue*. This was to be raised by "forming the virtuous and good men of all nations into a regular body, to be governed by suitable good and wise rules, which good and wise men may probably be more unanimous in their obedience to than common people are to common laws. I at present think," he added, "that whoever attempts this aright, and is well qualified, cannot fail of pleasing God, and of meeting with success." He formed a sort of creed, containing what he believed to be the essentials of every known religion, and upon which men of all religious faiths might unite. It was this:

"That there is one God, who made all things.

"That he governs the world by his Providence.

"That he ought to be worshipped by adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

"But that the most acceptable service to God is doing good to man.

"That the soul is immortal.

"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

But the prosecution of the grand scheme was postponed from time to time, owing, he says, to his then "narrow circumstances, and the necessity he was under of sticking to his business," and afterwards to "multifarious occupations, public and private;" till he was too old and infirm for such an enterprise.

Franklin seems to have forgotten that Jesus Christ had already established a society for the promotion of piety and virtue, designed to embrace the good and virtuous of all nations in a grand brotherhood; love to God and love to man being its sublime principle.



## CHAPTER XVI.

*Poor Richard's Almanac.—Address to the Reader.  
— Enigmatical Prophecies. — Harangue at an  
Auction.*

FRANKLIN'S fertile brain was ever devising some new scheme of practical utility. The plan for a library having proved successful, he commenced the next year, which was 1732, the publication of an almanac. It was announced as follows, in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 19th, 1732 :

“ Just published, for 1733, An Almanac, containing the Lunations, Eclipses, Planets' Motions and Aspects, Weather, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, High Water, &c.; besides many pleasant and witty Verses, Jests and Sayings; Author's Motive of Writing; Prediction of the Death of his Friend, Mr. Titan Leeds; Moon no Cuckold; Bachelor's Folly; Parson's Wine, and Baker's Pudding; Short Visits; Kings and Bears; New Fashions; Game for Kisses; Katherine's Love; Different Sentiments; Signs of a Tempest; Death of a Fisherman; Conjugal Debate; Men and Melons; The Prodigal; Breakfast in Bed; Oyster Lawsuit, &c. By Richard Saunders, Philomat. Printed and sold by B. Franklin.”

It was first published under the name of *Richard Saunders*, and was continued about

twenty-six years, being commonly known as *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

"I endeavored," says Franklin, "to make it both entertaining and useful, and it accordingly came to be in such demand that I reaped considerable profit from it, vending annually nearly ten thousand."

Three editions were called for before the end of January, and subsequently, though he published a larger number of copies, a second edition was often necessary to meet the demand. The almanac was a happy hit. It was a cheap vehicle for conveying instruction to the common people, who then bought very few books. The little spaces were filled with proverbial sentences, inculcating industry and frugality as the means of procuring a competence, and, as he says, "thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want to act always honestly, as 'it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.'"

Instructive hints were given in matters of morality and religion.

"And be not thou disturbed," the author says, in the almanac of 1739, "O great and sober reader, if, among the many serious sentences in my book, thou findest me trifling now and then, and talking idly. In all the dishes I have hitherto cooked for thee, there is solid meat enough for thy money. There are scraps from the table of wisdom, that will, if well digested, yield strong nourishment for the mind. But squeamish stomachs cannot eat without pickles; which, it is true, are good for nothing else, but they provoke an appetite. The vain youth, that reads my almanac for the sake

of an idle joke, will, perhaps, meet with a serious reflection, that he may the ever after be the better for."

Take, as an example of the amusing and instructive, one of his "Enigmatical Prophecies, which they that do not understand cannot well explain."

"Before the middle of this year, a wind at N. East will arise, during which the *water of the sea* and rivers will be in such a manner raised, that great part of the towns of Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, the low lands of Maryland and Virginia, and the town of Charleston in South Carolina, will be *under water*. Happy will it be for the sugar and salt standing in the cellars of those places, if there be tight roofs and ceilings overhead; otherwise, without being a Conjuror, a man may easily foretel that such commodities will receive damage."

In the next number appeared the following explanation:

"The water of the sea and rivers is raised in vapors by the sun, and is formed into clouds in the air, and thence descends in rains. Now, where there is rain overhead (which frequently happens when the wind is at N. E.), the cities and places on the earth below are certainly *under water*."

In the almanac of 1757, appeared a kind of summary of these proverbs, "the wisdom of many ages and nations," in the form of a harangue, by a wise old man, to the people attending an auction. Franklin thought that, in the form of a connected discourse, this condensed wisdom might make a greater impression. Nor was he disappointed. The piece met with extra

ordinary success. It was copied in all the newspapers of the country, was reprinted in Great Britain, on a large sheet of paper, to be stuck up in houses, and at least three translations were made of it in France, where great numbers were bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants.

"In Pennsylvania," says Franklin, "as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication."

The word *Richard* was not retained in Du-bourg's version, it signifying, in French, a *rich man*; but a later translation entitled the piece *La Science du Bonhomme Richard*. A translation into modern Greek appeared in 1833.

The work was ingeniously introduced as follows :

"I stopt my horse lately where a great number of people were collected at a vendue of merchant goods. The hour of sale not being come, they were conversing on the hardness of the times, and one of the company called to a plain, clean old man, with white locks, 'Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? Won't these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we be ever able to pay them? What would you advise us to?' . . . Father Abraham stood up and replied: 'If ye'd have my advice, I'll give it you in short, for "A word to the wise is enough," and "Many words won't fill a bushel," as Poor Richard says.' They joined in desiring him to speak his mind, and gathering round him, he proceeded as follows:

" 'Friends,' says he, 'and neighbors, the taxes are indeed

very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our Idleness, three times as much by our Pride, and four times as much by our Folly, and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an abatement.

“However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us. “God helps them that help themselves,” as Poor Richard says.

“I. It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth part of their time, to be employed with service. But Idleness taxes many of us much more, if we reckon all that is spent in absolute sloth, or doing of nothing, with that which is spent in idle employments or amusements, that amount to nothing. Sloth, by bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. “Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright,” as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep! forgetting that “The sleeping fox catches no poultry,” and “There will be sleeping enough in the grave,” as Poor Richard says.

“If time be, of all things, the most precious, then “wasting time must be,” as Poor Richard says, “the greatest prodigality,” since, as he elsewhere tells us, “Lost time is never found again,” and what we call “Time enough, always proves little enough.” Let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. “Sloth makes all things difficult, but Industry all easy,” as Poor Richard says; and “He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night.” “While Laziness travels so slowly that Poverty soon overtakes him,” as we read in Poor Richard; who adds: “Drive the business, let not that drive thee;” and “Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy,

wealthy and wise," as Poor Richard says.

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better if we bestir ourselves. "Industry need not wish," as Poor Richard says, and "He that lives upon hope will die fasting." "There are no gains without pains;" then "Help hands, for I have no lands," or, if I have, they are smartly taxed. And, as Poor Richard likewise observes, "He that hath a trade hath an estate," and "He that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor;" but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling well followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious we shall never starve; for, as Poor Richard says, "At the working-man's home hunger looks in, but dares not enter." . . .

Work while it is called To-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered to-morrow, which makes Poor Richard say: "One to-day is worth two to-morrows;" and, farther, "Have you somewhat to do to-morrow? Do it to-day." If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you then your own master? "Be ashamed to catch yourself idle," as Poor Dick says. When there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, be up by peep of day: "Let not the Sun look down and say, *Inglorious here he lies!*" Handle your tools without mittens; remember that "The cat in gloves catches no mice," as Poor Richard says. 'Tis true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects, for "Continual dropping wears away stones," and "By diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable;" and "Little strokes fell great oaks," as Poor Richard says in his almanack, the year I cannot just now remember. Methinks I hear some of you say, "Must a man afford himself no leisure?" I will tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says: "Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure; and

since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour." Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; for "A life of laziness and a life of leisure are two things." "Many without labor would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock;" whereas industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect. "Fly pleasures, and they will follow you." "The diligent spinner has a large shift, and now I have a sheep and a cow, everybody bids me good morrow."

"II. But with our Industry, we must likewise be steady, settled and careful, and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes, and not trust too much to others; for, as Poor Richard says:

"I never saw an oft-removed tree,  
Nor yet an oft-removed family,  
That throve so well as those that settled be."

And again: "Three removes are as bad as a fire;" and again, "Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee;" and again, "If you would have your business done, go; if not, send." And again:

"He that by the plough would thrive,  
Himself must either hold or drive."

And again, "The eye of a master will do more work than both his hands;" and again, "Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge;" and again, "Not to oversee workmen is to leave them your purse open." Trusting too much to others' care is the ruin of many; for "In the affairs of this world men are saved, not by faith, but by the want of it;" but a man's own care is profitable, for "If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you like, serve yourself." "A little neglect may breed great mischief; for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy, all for want of a little care about a horse-shoe nail."

“‘III. So much for industry, my friends, and attention to one’s own business; but to these we must add Frugality, if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone, and die not worth a groat at last. “A fat kitchen makes a lean mill;” and

“Many estates are spent in the getting,

Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting,  
And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting.”

. . . . .

“‘And further, “What maintains one vice would bring up two children.” . . . Beware of little expenses; “A small leak will sink a great ship,” as Poor Richard says, . . . and, moreover, “Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.”

“‘Here you are all got together at this vendue of fineries and knickknacks. You call them goods, but if you do not take care, they will prove evils to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost, but if you have no occasion for them, they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says: “Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessities;” and again, “At a great pennyworth pause awhile.” . . . “Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets, have put out the kitchen fire,” as Poor Richard says. . . And again, “Pride is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy. . . . Pride that dines on vanity, sups on contempt,” as Poor Richard says. And, in another place, “Pride breakfasted with plenty, dined with poverty, and supped with infamy.” . . .

“‘But what madness it must be to run in debt for these superfluities. We are offered by the terms of this vendue, six months’ credit; . . . but, ah! think what you do when you run in debt. You give to another power over your liberty. If you cannot pay at the time, you will be



ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor, pitiful, sneaking excuses, and by degrees come to lose your veracity, and sink into base, downright lying; for, as Poor Richard says, "The second vice is lying, the first is running in debt." And again, to the same purpose, "Lying rides upon Debt's back." . . . But poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. "'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright," as Poor Richard says. . . . Then since, as he says, "The borrower is a slave to the lender, and the debtor to the creditor," disdain the claim, preserve your freedom, and maintain your independency. *Be industrious and free; be frugal and free.* . . . Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever while you live, expense is constant and certain, and "'Tis easier to build two chimneys, than to keep one in fuel," as Poor Richard says. So, "Rather go to bed supperless, than rise in debt."

"'This doctrine, my friends, is reason and wisdom; but, after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry, and frugality, and prudence, though excellent things; for they may all be blasted, without the blessing of Heaven; and therefore, ask that blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember, Job suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.

"'And now, to conclude: "Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other," as Poor Richard says: and scarce in that, for it is true "We may give advice, but we cannot give conduct." However, remember this: "They that will not be counselled, cannot be helped;" and, further, "If you will not hear Reason, she will surely rap your knuckles," as Poor Richard says.'

Thus the old gentleman ended his harangue. The people heard it, and approved the doctrine, and — *immediately practised the contrary.*"

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Employment for Woman. — Establishes a Printing-office in Charleston. — What a Woman did. Foreign Languages. — Playing Chess. — The Study of Languages. — Visits Boston. — Calls at Newport. — James Franklin. — A Reconciliation. — Death of his Son Francis. — The Junto. — New Clubs. — In Public Life. — Clerk of the Assembly. — Subduing a Foe. — Becomes Deputy-Postmaster. — New Prosperity. — His Newspaper. — Municipal Improvements. — City Watch. — Fire Company.*

EVEN when a young man, Franklin was a practical philosopher, and introduced or suggested many improvements which have since been widely adopted. The providing employment for women, especially for young women, is a subject which much engages the attention of philanthropists and social scientists in our time. But Franklin was before them. In 1733 he sent one of his journeymen, with press and type, to Charleston, South Carolina, to set up the printing business, on an agreement that he was to receive one-third of the profits, and pay one-third of the expense. The man made some remittances, but being ignorant of keeping accounts,

never gave a satisfactory statement of the business.

"On his decease," says Franklin, "the business was continued by his widow, who, being born and bred in Holland, where, as I have been informed, the knowledge of accounts makes a part of female education, she not only sent me as clear a statement as she could find of the transactions past, but continued to account, with the greatest regularity and exactness, every quarter afterwards; and managed the business with such success, that she not only reputably brought up a family of children, but, at the expiration of the term, was able to purchase of me the printing-house, and establish her son in it.

"I mention this affair," he adds, "chiefly for the sake of recommending that branch of education for our young women, as likely to be of more use to them and their children, in case of widowhood, than either music or dancing."

The same year, he entered upon the study of foreign languages. He was soon able to read French with facility, and then he commenced Italian, with a friend. This friend was fond of chess, and used to tempt Franklin to play with him. Finding this took up too much of the time he had to spare for study, he refused to play any more, "unless the victor, in every game, should have a right to impose a task, either of parts of the grammar to be got by heart, or in translations; which task the vanquished was to perform, upon honor, before our next meeting. As we played pretty equally," he adds, "we thus beat one another in that to language."

With a "little pains-taking," he also made himself familiar with Spanish.

Already, when very young, he had had a year's instruction in Latin, but afterwards had entirely neglected that language. His acquisition of French, Italian and Spanish now led him to look over a Latin Testament, to ascertain how much he knew of that tongue. To his surprise he understood much more of it than he expected, and he was encouraged to apply himself again to the study of it, and with the more success, from the preceding languages having greatly smoothed the way.

His experience in these studies led him to make a suggestion, upon which many in our day are inclined to act, whether as teachers or in personal study. It was, that instead of beginning with Latin, the study of which was supposed to render easier the attainment of modern languages, but which afterward was often neglected, we should rather begin with the French, and then advance to the Italian and Latin.

"For though," he says, "after spending the same time they should quit the study of languages, and never arrive at the Latin, they would, however, have acquired another tongue or two, that, being in modern use, might be serviceable to them in modern life."

In the year 1734, ten years after his visit to Boston, at the advice of Gov. Keith, he made a journey thither to visit his relations. He was now in easier circumstances, and was able to fulfil his long cherished purpose. On his way he called at Newport, Rhode Island, to see his brother James, who had removed his press to

that town. Years and sickness seem to have mellowed the heart of the elder brother, for James was fast declining in health, and the meeting was cordial and affectionate. It was now Benjamin's turn to do a favor, which his brother requested of him, namely, to take home his son, then a lad of ten years, and bring him up to the printing business. Franklin accepted the trust, and went beyond his promise, for he sent his nephew to school a few years before he took him into the office. And when he was grown up, and was to return to Newport to take charge of the business, which his mother had kept up during his minority, Franklin furnished him an assortment of new types. It was noble to show such kindness to one who had greatly wronged him and treated him in a manner most unbrotherly, and even to regard himself as his debtor; for "thus it was," he says, "that I made my brother ample amends for the service I had deprived him of by leaving him so early."

Franklin has left no account of his visit at Boston. He had now no apologies to make, and no favors to ask. By invincible industry he had conquered every difficulty, and won his way to independence, and to the consideration of his fellow-men. He was now twenty-eight years of age, a married man, a father, an influential citizen. It would be pleasant if he had told us something about his reception at his former home, and had given us some of his reflections upon men and things in the old Puritan town.

Probably his stay was short, for Franklin was not a man to waste time, even among friends, when business at home needed his personal attention.

In the year 1736, six years after his marriage, the joy which had gladdened his household for four years was turned to bitterness. Little Francis, the only son of Benjamin and Deborah, "a fine boy," "the delight of all that knew him," died of the small-pox. "I long regretted him bitterly," says Franklin; and thirty-six years after the event, he wrote to his sister Jane: "To this day I cannot think of him without a sigh." Franklin was no sentimentalist, as everybody knows, but neither was he the stoic that some have perhaps taken him to be. He had trained himself to be calm and collected, to endure with equanimity the trials that come to a man in the affairs of business, and the conflicts of the world; but he had a tender heart, and such a sorrow as this which befell him left a wound that never healed. Perhaps this was sent to counteract the materialistic tendencies of certain opinions which he had taken up. The memory of that dead child of his love may have been an inspiration and a guide in after years beyond all his philosophy.

The Junto, of which mention has already been made, was intended to be known only to the members, twelve in number, in order to prevent application of improper persons for admittance. But the club "was found so useful, and afforded

such satisfaction to the members, that some were desirous of introducing their friends." Franklin opposed this, but suggested another plan, that each member should endeavor to form a subordinate club, without disclosing its connection with the Junto. Thus so many more young citizens would be benefited; the members of the Junto would be better informed of the general sentiments of the people on any occasion; their particular interests in business would be promoted by more extensive recommendation; and their influence in public affairs increased, as well as their power of doing good by spreading through the several clubs the sentiments of the Junto.

The project was approved, but only five or six clubs were formed, bearing such names as The Vine, The Union, The Band. They benefited the members, and afforded to the original Junto a great deal of information and amusement, each member having to report to the Junto what passed at his separate club.

Franklin now began to make his first appearance in public life. In 1736, being thirty-one years of age, he was unanimously chosen Clerk of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. The next year there was a slight opposition from a new member, who had a favorite candidate whom he recommended in a long speech. But Franklin was again chosen. The office was quite a desirable one, as, besides the salary, it helped to secure the public printing. Naturally, therefore, he did not like the opposition of this mem-

ber, "who was a gentleman of fortune and education, with talents that were likely to give him, in time, great influence in the House."

Franklin took a characteristic method of disarming his opposition and gaining his friendship.

"Having heard," he says, "that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting that he would do me the favor of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I returned it in about a week, with another note, expressing strongly the sense of the favor. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me, which he had never done before, and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends; and our friendship continued to his death.

"This is another instance," he adds, "of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says, 'He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged. And it shows how much more profitable it is prudently to remove, than to resent, return and continue, inimical proceedings.'"

In 1737 he met with another piece of good fortune, or, rather, his industry and integrity were rewarded, in his being appointed deputy-postmaster at Philadelphia. Colonel Spottswood, not long before Governor of Virginia, and then Postmaster General, had become dissatisfied with Mr. Bradford, for his carelessness and negligence in keeping and rendering his accounts, and took away his commission. Franklin found the office of great advantage; for, though the salary was small, it facilitated the correspondence that im



proved his newspaper, increased the subscription list and the number of advertisements, and thus afforded him a considerable income. His old competitor's newspaper declined, though Franklin disdained to imitate his predecessor's meanness by refusing to permit his papers to be carried by the post-riders. He adds that, from Mr. Bradford's misfortune, young men in others' employ may learn a lesson as to rendering accounts and making remittances with great clearness and promptness. The character thus acquired is "the most powerful of all recommendations to new employments and increase of business."

It was, doubtless, with some feeling of exultation that Franklin inserted the following notice in his newspaper :

"October 27th, 1737. — Notice is hereby given that the post-office of Philadelphia is now kept at B. Franklin's, in Market Street; and that Henry Pratt is appointed Riding Postmaster for all the stages between Philadelphia and Newport in Virginia, who sets out about the beginning of each month, and returns in twenty-four days; by whom gentlemen, merchants and others, may have their letters carefully conveyed, and business faithfully transacted, he having given good security for the same to the Honorable Colonel Spotswood, Postmaster-General of all his Majesty's Dominions in America."

The new deputy at once brought order out of confusion, and introduced important improvements. An advertisement, dated April 14, 1743, informed the public that,

"After this week, the northern post will set out for New

York on Thursdays, at three o'clock in the afternoon, till Christmas. The southern post sets out next Monday at eight o'clock for Annapolis, and continues going every fortnight during the summer season."

During the rest of the season, the post between Philadelphia and New York went only once a fortnight.

Franklin's ingenious public spirit now began to originate municipal improvements. He "put his thought into Philadelphia, and in twenty-five years organized its municipal affairs, its education and charity, more wisely than any city in the world." The first measure he attempted was the improvement of the city-watch.

"It was then managed," he says, "by the constables of the respective wards in turn; the constable summoned a number of housekeepers to attend him for the night. Those who chose never to attend paid him six shillings to be excused, which was supposed to go to hiring substitutes, [but which for the most part went into his pockets;] and the constable for a little drink often got such ragamuffins about him as a watch, as respectable housekeepers did not choose to mix with. Walking the rounds, too, was often neglected, and most of the nights spent in tippling. I thereupon wrote a paper to be read in the Junto, representing these irregularities, but insisting more particularly on the inequality of the six shilling tax of the constable; since a poor widow housekeeper, all whose property to be guarded by the watch did not, perhaps, exceed the value of fifty pounds, paid as much as the wealthiest merchant."

Franklin proposed that suitable men for the duty be appointed, and paid by an equitable tax

on the citizens, which plan was substantially adopted after a few years.

About this time (1737), Franklin wrote a paper for the Junto, which was afterwards published, on accidents by fire. This resulted soon after in the formation of a fire-company, named The Union Fire Company, which included, also, mutual assistance in removing and securing goods when in danger. Thirty associates were soon found. Each member was required to keep always in good order a certain number of leathern buckets, with strong bags and baskets for packing and transporting goods, which were to be brought to every fire. Once a month a social evening was spent in talking over the subject of fires, and their management.

The benefit of this organization was at once so apparent that one fire company after another sprung up, till they became so numerous as to include most of the male property-holders. Fifty years afterwards, Franklin and one other person were the only surviving constituent members of the Union company.

"The fines," he then remarked, "that have been paid by members for absence at the monthly meetings, have been applied to the purchase of fire-engines, ladders, fire-hooks and other useful implements for each company; so that I question whether there is a city in the world better provided with the means of putting a stop to beginning conflagrations; and, in fact, since these institutions, the city has never lost by fire more than one or two houses at a time; and the flames have often been extinguished before the house in which they began has been half-consumed."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*George Whitfield. — A Meeting-house. — Orphan House in Georgia. — Franklin's Pockets Emptied. — The Quaker's Reply. — Franklin's Intimacy with Whitfield. — Whitfield's Voice. — His Old and New Sermons. — Letter to Whitfield. — Franklin's Religious Views. — Prosperity in Business. — Views of Partnership. — Franklin's Store. — In Boston. — Dr. Spence. — Electrical Experiments. — Electrical Kiss. — Magical Picture. — The Conspirators. — Electrical Pic-nic. — Electricity and Lightning. — His Reputation in England. — The Royal Society.*

IN the year 1739, that remarkable preacher, Rev. George Whitfield, of England, arrived in Philadelphia. He had won great celebrity in his own country by his extraordinary eloquence and zeal. In Philadelphia some of the clergy received him coldly and refused him their pulpits, but multitudes of all denominations flocked to hear him, in the fields. It was soon proposed to erect a building in which he might preach, and money enough for the purpose was at once raised. A house one hundred feet long and seventy broad was in a short time finished, the

property being vested in trustees, expressly for the use of any preacher of any religious persuasion who might desire to say something to the people at Philadelphia; "so that," says Franklin, "even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mahometanism to us, he would find a pulpit at his service."

Franklin doubtless had a hand in the erection of an edifice on so liberal a basis; and the interest which we may readily suppose him to have taken in this affair, in favor of free speech against the narrowness that would have silenced Whitfield, may have first led to that intimate friendship which existed between them through life, wholly unlike as they were in many respects, and especially in religious doctrines. Whitfield was all on fire with religious zeal, and held to some of the most rigid tenets of Calvinism, while Franklin was a calm philosopher, who thought little of dogma and everything of practical morality. It is to the credit of both that they could be sincere mutual friends, each discerning and respecting the good that was in the other.

Franklin mentions an incident which shows this preacher's "wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers." Whitfield, during a visit to Georgia, formed the plan of an Orphan House to be established in that colony, and on his return to Philadelphia he solicited contributions in aid of the object. Franklin, while admiring the benevolence of the design, thought it

better that the institution be established in Philadelphia, and the poor children brought to it from Georgia, which plan, in his opinion, would be attended with far less expense. He therefore refused to contribute to Mr. Whitfield's plan. But the philosopher had to bow to the preacher.

"I happened soon after," he says, "to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all.

"At this sermon there was also one of our club, who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had by precaution emptied his pockets before he came from home. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbor, who stood near him, to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was fortunately made to perhaps the only man in the company, who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, 'At any other time, friend Hopkins, I would lend to thee freely; but not now; for thee seems to be out of thy right senses.'"

Franklin had a very high regard for Whitfield. "He is a good man, and I love him," he wrote to his brother.

Franklin gives the following instance of the terms on which they stood.

"Upon one of his arrivals from England at Boston, he wrote to me that he should come soon to Philadelphia, but knew not where he could lodge when there, as he understood his old friend and host, Mr. Benezet, was removed to Germantown. My answer was, 'You know my house; if you can make shift with its scanty accommodation, you will be most heartily welcome.' He replied, that if I made that kind offer for Christ's sake, I should not miss of a reward. And I returned, 'Don't let me be mistaken; it was not for Christ's sake, but for your sake.'"

Which, doubtless, was the simple fact, Franklin, in making the invitation, thinking only of accommodating his friend.

"Whitfield had a loud clear voice, and articulated his words so perfectly," says Franklin, "that he might be heard and understood at a great distance. He preached one evening from the top of the Court-house steps, which are in the middle of Market Street, and on the west side of Second Street, which crosses it at right angles. Both streets were filled with his hearers to a considerable distance. Being among the hindmost in Market Street, I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard, by retiring backwards down the street towards the river; and I found his voice distinct till I came near Front street, when some noise in that street obscured it. Imagining then a semicircle, of which my distance should be the radius, and that it was filled with auditors, to each of whom I allowed two square feet, I computed that he might be well heard by more than thirty thousand. This reconciled me to the newspaper accounts of his having preached to twenty-five thousand people in the fields, and to the history of generals haranguing whole armies, of which I had sometimes doubted.

"By hearing him often I came to distinguish easily between sermons newly composed, and those which he had

often preached in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetitions, that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well tuned and well placed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse; a pleasure of much the same kind with that received from an excellent piece of music."

A correspondence seems to have been kept up between Franklin and Whitfield. In 1764, the former wrote the following :

"Your frequently repeated wishes for my eternal as well as my temporal happiness, are very obliging, and I can only thank you for them, and offer you mine in return. I have myself no doubt that I shall enjoy as much of both as is proper for me. That Being who gave me existence, and through almost threescore years has been continually showering his favors upon me, whose very chastisements have been blessings to me, can I doubt that he loves me? And, if he loves me, can I doubt that he will go on to take care of me, not only here but hereafter? This to some may seem presumption; to me it appears the best grounded hope; hope of the future built on experience of the past."

Franklin's business was now constantly improving. He printed many books, most of them, it appears, theological; his general printing increased, and his newspaper, having a wide circulation, being almost the only one in Pennsylvania and the neighboring provinces, had now become very profitable.

"I experienced," he says, "the truth of the observation, that after getting the first four hundred pounds, it is more easy to get the second, money itself being of a prolific nature."



He established several of his workmen in business in different colonies, on the same principle of partnership that had succeeded so well in South Carolina. An agreement of this kind existed between Franklin and James Parker at New York, for many years. Most of the partners did well, being able, at the end of the term of union, which was six years, to purchase the types, furnished by Franklin, and to conduct business for themselves. In every case the partnership was carried on and ended amicably, "owing, I think," says Franklin, "a good deal to the precaution of having very explicitly settled, in our articles, everything to be done by or expected from each partner, so that there was nothing to dispute; which precaution," he adds, "I would recommend to all who enter into partnerships; for, whatever esteem partners may have for, and confidence in, each other at the time of the contract, little jealousies and disgusts may arise, with ideas of inequality in the care and burden, which are often attended with breach of friendship and of the connection; perhaps with lawsuits and other disagreeable consequences."

It was about this time, in 1742, that Franklin invented "an open stove for the better warming of rooms, and at the same time saving fuel," which has always borne his name. He presented the model to Mr. Robert Grace, one of his early friends, who had an iron-furnace, and who "found the casting of the plates for these stoves

a profitable thing." To increase the demand, Franklin wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled, *An Account of the new-invented Pennsylvanian Fire-places, etc.* Governor Thomas was so much pleased with the stove as to offer Franklin a patent for the sole right of sale for a term of years; but, he says, "I declined it from a principle which has ever weighed with me on such occasions, viz.: *That as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously.*"

An ironmonger of London, having read Franklin's pamphlet, published it as his own, after a few changes, and taking out a patent of the invention, made a little fortune by it.

In the year 1746, Franklin, being in Boston, on business connected probably with the defense of Philadelphia, made the acquaintance of Dr. Spence, recently from Scotland, and saw him perform some electrical experiments. Electricity was then scarcely a science. From that time it was destined to assume a new dignity. Franklin's curiosity was greatly excited by what he saw, and, on his return to Philadelphia, he commenced a series of ingenious experiments with a glass tube lately received from London, which awakened universal wonder. Writing next year to a friend, he says: "I never was before engaged in any study that so totally engrossed my attention and my time, as this has

lately done ; for what with making experiments when I can be alone, and repeating them to my friends and acquaintance, who, from the novelty of the thing, come continually in crowds to see them, I have, during some months past, had little leisure for anything else." Experiments that seem trite to us, had then the wonderful charm of novelty. A new world was opened. " We light candles just blown out," says Franklin, speaking of the Leyden jar, " by drawing a spark among the smoke, between the wire and snuffers. We represent lightning, by passing the wire in the dark, over a China plate, that has gilt flowers. We electrize a person twenty or more times running, with a touch of the finger on the wire, thus ; he stands on wax. Give him the electrized bottle in his hand. Touch the wire with your finger, and then touch his hand or face ; there are sparks everytime." Franklin got up an " Electrical Kiss," which amused everybody. " Let A and B stand on wax, or A on wax, and B on the floor ; give one of them the electrized phial in hand ; let the other take hold of the wire ; there will be a small spark ; but when their lips approach, they will be struck and shocked." He invented a " Counterfeit Spider," made of burnt cork, with legs of linen thread, and a grain or two of lead stuck in him, to give him more weight, and by means of electricity, he made him spring back and forth, " playing with his legs in a very entertaining manner, appearing perfectly alive to

persons unacquainted." With becoming loyalty to science and King George the second, he invented a "Magical Picture." There was a large mezzotinto of his Majesty with a frame of glass, having a little movable gilt crown on his head. The picture being electrified, whoever took hold of the frame with one hand, touching its inside gilding, and with the other attempted to take off the crown, would receive a terrible blow, and fail in the attempt. "If," says Franklin, "the picture were highly charged, the consequence might perhaps be as fatal as that of high treason;" and he adds, "if a ring of persons take the shock among them, the experiment is called, *The Conspirators*. Something more than a score of years later, Franklin, with other "conspirators," succeeded in wresting, if not the crown, yet the brightest gem from the crown, of another George. Franklin turned his electricity upon hens and turkeys, and other small animals, proving its power to take away life. Thus he went on, making a great variety of experiments, which were leading him to the grand discovery of the identity of lightning and electricity.

"But the hot weather coming on," he says, "when electrical experiments were not so agreeable, it was proposed to put an end to them for this season, somewhat humorously, in a party of pleasure on the banks of the Schuylkill. Spirits, at the same time, are to be fired by a spark sent from side to side through the river, without any other conductor than the water, an experiment which we sometime since performed to the amazement of many. A turkey is to be

killed for our dinner by the *electrical shock*, and roasted by the *electrical jack*, before a fire kindled by the electrified bottle; when the healths of all the famous electricians in England, Holland, France and Germany, are to be drank in *electrified bumpers*, under the discharge of guns from the *electrical battery*."

The bumper was a small, thin, glass tumbler, nearly filled with wine, and electrified as the bottle. This when brought to the lips gave a shock.

It was in 1747, that Franklin ventured the conjecture that electricity and lightning were the same. Two years later, "he conceived," says Stuber, "the astonishingly bold and grand idea of ascertaining the truth of his doctrine, by actually drawing down the lightning, by means of sharp-pointed iron rods, raised into the region of the clouds." Meanwhile, he tried humbler methods of verifying his theory. And even at this period he suggested the idea of protecting houses and ships by means of pointed rods.

Franklin's experiments did not at first meet with much respectful attention in England. Some letters of his to a friend in London containing an account of them, though permitted to be read before the Royal Society, were not then thought worth being printed in their *Transactions*, and one paper, on the sameness of lightning with electricity, was actually laughed at by the wise heads. There was one man, however, Dr. Fothergill, who advised the printing of these papers; when they were published by

Cave, in a pamphlet form, he wrote the preface. The pamphlet did not, however, immediately attract much notice in England. An almost unknown inhabitant of a remote American colony — what could he have to communicate that was not already familiar to European scholars? “Dost thou teach us?” — and they passed him by as unworthy their attention.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*A Proposal for a College. — Philosophical Society. Its Objects. — American Philosophical Society. — Defence of the Province. — Designs of France. — Louisburg. — A Quaker Colony. — A Voluntary Militia. — “Plain Truth.” — Elected Colonel. — A Battery. — A Lottery. — Procuring Cannon. — Governor Clinton. — The Proprietaries Displeased. — Proposes a Fast. — Writes a Proclamation. — His Rule About Offices. — Re-elected Clerk. — The Quakers on Defensive War.*

HAVING thus risen to a condition of easy independence, Franklin did not, as too many do, in their growing desire to become rich, forget his duties to the community and to mankind. His comfortable circumstances seemed to widen his vision and to expand his sympathies. His first thoughts of this kind were naturally given to Pennsylvania. He observed with regret that there was no provision for defence against foreign enemies and the Indians, nor for a system of complete education. The most pressing want was a college or academy. Franklin was what is commonly termed a “self-made” man, having never enjoyed so much as two years’ schooling,

and having risen, by his own private studies, to a position of equality with persons who had enjoyed the best academical advantages; but he had the breadth of mind to appreciate at their proper value institutions of learning. He drew up, in 1743, a proposal for an academy, but unfavorable circumstances compelled a postponement of the project till 1749. In the meantime, in 1744, he succeeded in establishing a Philosophical Society. He wrote a paper setting forth the objects and advantages of such an association, and when it was formed, he became its Secretary. This paper shows what a wide range of subjects had occupied his thoughts, and how minute, and yet how broad had been his observation of nature, of science, and of useful arts and inventions. The members of the society were to consider,

“Newly discovered plants, herbs, trees, roots, their virtues, uses, methods of propagating them, and making such as are useful, but particular to some plantations, more general; improvements of vegetable juices; as ciders, wines; new methods of curing or preventing diseases; all new-discovered fossils in different countries, as mines, minerals, and quarries; new and useful improvements in distillation, brewing, and assaying of ores; new mechanical inventions for saving labor, as mills and carriages, and for raising and conveying of water, draining of meadows; all new arts, trades, or manufactures, that may be proposed or thought of; surveys, maps, and charts of particular parts of the sea-coasts or inland countries; course and junction of rivers and great roads, situation of lakes and mountains, nature of the soil and productions; new methods of improving the breed of



useful animals; introducing other sorts from foreign countries; new improvements in planting, gardening, and clearing land; and all philosophical experiments that let light into the nature of things, tend to increase the power of man over matter, and multiply the conveniences or pleasures of life."

The association was never very prosperous, but it resulted, many years later, in the establishment of the American Philosophical Society.

Having accomplished so much in the cause of education, Franklin next turned his attention to the subject of defence. The country was in danger. The European wars of that time, extending through a period of eight years, affected even the American colonies. France was the chronic rival and enemy of England on the American continent, claiming, as she did, the whole of it, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, back of the narrow British settlements on the Atlantic coast. England had just been driven into a war with Spain, and France was likely to become a party to the contest. This filled the colonies with new alarm. In New England, the people went beyond mere defence; an expedition was fitted out against Louisburg, on Cape Breton — the "Gibraltar of North America," — for the special purpose of keeping the French so occupied at home, as to be unable to stir up Indian raids upon the colonial villages. The whole extent of the sea-board was in peril from the front, by sea, and in the rear, and this anxiety harassed the minds of the British settlers till the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748.

Franklin saw the danger ; but what could be done ? Pennsylvania was a Quaker colony ; its proprietaries and legislators were opposed to war, and of course were not disposed to take any measures looking to military defence. The governor at that time, Thomas, earnestly besought the Quaker Assembly to pass a militia law, and to make other provisions for the security of the province, but to no purpose. They meant to stand by their peace principles. But where the governor failed, a private citizen, our master-printer, succeeded. Leaving the Assembly to its own course, he proposed to try what could be done by a voluntary subscription of the people. To effect this purpose, he resorted to what was with him a very common means of introducing a new project, he wrote a pamphlet. It was entitled **PLAIN TRUTH**, and set forth in a strong light the helpless situation of the province, and the necessity of union and discipline for its defence. He added that in a few days he should propose an association to accomplish the purpose.

“The pamphlet,” he says, “had a sudden and surprising effect. I was called upon for the instrument of association. Having settled the draft of it with a few friends, I appointed a meeting of the citizens in the large building, [where Whitfield had preached]. The house was pretty full: I had prepared a number of printed copies, and provided pens and ink dispersed all over the room. I harangued them a little on the subject, read the paper, explained it, and then distributed the copies, which were eagerly signed, not the least objection being made.

“When the company separated, and the papers were col-

lected, we found above twelve hundred signatures, and, other copies being dispersed in the country, the subscribers amounted at length to upwards of ten thousand. These all furnished themselves, as soon as they could, with arms, formed themselves into companies and regiments, chose their own officers, and met every week to be instructed in the manual exercise, and other parts of military discipline. The women, by subscriptions among themselves, provided silk colors, which they presented to the companies, painted with different devices and mottoes, which I supplied."

The ladies also provided "the officers' half-pikes and spontoons, and even the halberds and drums."

Franklin was elected colonel of the Philadelphia regiment, but he declined the office, recommending Mr. Lawrence, "a fine person, and a man of influence," who was appointed.

A battery was needed below the town, and Franklin, ever fertile in resources, proposed a lottery to defray the expense of building it, and furnishing it with cannon. Lotteries were then, and later, considered very proper means of raising money for good objects, even religious, but they are now justly regarded as very objectionable, and are forbidden by law in most of the States. The lottery in this case proved successful, and the battery was built. Some cannon were bought in Boston, and more were sent for from London. Application was made to Gov. Clinton, of New York, for the loan of cannon for immediate service, Franklin, Colonel Lawrence and others being commissioned to visit New York for that purpose. The governor at first

gave a plump refusal, but at a dinner with his Council, being mellowed with much wine, he so far relented as to offer six.

"After a few more bumpers," says Franklin, "he advanced to ten, and at length he very good-naturedly conceded eighteen. They were fine cannon, eighteen-pounders, with their carriages, which were soon transported, and mounted on our batteries; where the association kept a nightly guard, while the war lasted; and among the rest I regularly took my turn of duty there, as a common soldier."

The proprietaries were not pleased with these popular measures. They were illegal, they said, and would be a dangerous precedent, by encouraging the people to put forth new claims to civil privileges, threatening their own prerogatives as masters of the province. They also opposed them on the ground of religious principle, war being, in their opinion, wholly unchristian.

But the governor and council were pleased with Franklin's activity in these operations. They took him into their confidence, and consulted him in every measure where their concurrence was thought advantageous to the military association.

Franklin proposed a fast, "to promote reformation, and implore the blessing of Heaven," which the magistrates just mentioned approved of. But the Secretary being at a loss how to word such a proclamation, this being the first fast ever held in that province, Franklin's ready pen was called into requisition.

"My education in New England," he says, "where a fast is proclaimed every year, was here of some advantage; I drew it in the accustomed style; it was translated into German, printed in both languages, and circulated through the province. This gave the clergy of the different sects an opportunity of influencing their congregations to join the Association, and it would probably have been general among all but the Quakers, if the peace (of 1748) had not soon intervened."

Franklin was told that his activity in these affairs would be likely to lose him the friendship of the Quakers, who were a great majority in the Assembly, and that at the next election he would be put out of his clerkship. A young man who desired the office, and who announced that he expected to get it, advised Franklin as a friend to resign. Franklin replied, that it was a rule with him never to ask an office, and never to refuse one when offered; and he added:

"I approve of this rule, and shall practice it with a small addition; I shall never ask, never refuse, nor ever *resign* an office. If they will have my office of clerk to dispose of it to another, they shall take it from me. I will not, by giving it up, lose my right of some time or other making reprisal on my adversaries."

But he was unanimously re-elected, and he had some reason to believe that the defence of the country was not disagreeable to any of the Assembly, provided they were not required to assist in it. "And I found," he adds, "that a much greater number of them than I could

have imagined, though against *offensive* war, were clearly for *defensive*. Many pamphlets *pro* and *con* were published on the subject, and some by good Quakers, in favor of defence; which I believe convinced most of their young people."

## CHAPTER XX.

*Peace Concluded.—An Academy.—“Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth.”—Plan of Education.—How Franklin became a Member of the Board.—A Charity School.—Philosophical Studies.—Buys Dr. Spence’s Apparatus.—Commissioner of the Peace.—Alderman.—Member of the Assembly.—Letter from his Mother.—Postscript from his Sister.—Charles Sumner.—His Son elected Clerk.—One of a Commission to treat with the Indians.—Conduct of the Indians.—Effect of Ardent Spirits.—A Hospital.—How he obtained a Subscription.—The Subject in the Assembly.—His Views about caring for the Poor.—Improvement of the Streets.—Becomes Postmaster General.—Receives the Degree of Master of Arts.—Dignity of Labor.—On Luxury.—The Farmer at Cape May.*

“PEACE being concluded,” says Franklin, “and the Association business therefore at an end, I turned my thoughts again to the affair of establishing an Academy.” This was in 1749. Again he wrote a pamphlet, entitled, *Proposals relating to the Education of youth in Pennsylvania*, which was distributed gratis among the

principal inhabitants. In it, he set forth a liberal plan of education, the several courses varying, however, according to the intended occupations of the students. It concluded with these noble words:

“The idea of what is true merit should also be often presented to youth, explained and impressed on their minds, as consisting in an inclination, joined with an ability, to serve mankind, one’s country, friends, and family; which ability is, with the blessing of God, to be acquired or greatly increased by true learning; and should, indeed, be the great aim and end of all learning.”

To carry out his plan, Franklin opened a subscription, to be paid in annual instalments for five years; which amounted to five thousand pounds. Liberal donations were subsequently made, through Franklin’s influence, in America and England. In appointing Trustees, one of each religious sect then in the city was selected; one Episcopalian, one Presbyterian, one Baptist, one Moravian, etc. Franklin, being of “no sect,” at first had no place in the Board; but on the death of the Moravian member, who had not worked harmoniously with the rest, it was resolved not to appoint another from that denomination, and now Franklin’s previous disqualification became a reason for his election. “One mentioned me,” he says, “with the observation that I was merely an honest man, and of no sect at all, which prevailed with them to choose me.”

The school rapidly increasing, the large build-



ing erected by Mr. Whitfield's hearers was obtained, and fitted for the use of the Academy, the whole care of the work falling upon the new member. Franklin gave his time cheerfully to the task, which he was the better able to do, from having taken a faithful partner the previous year, who relieved him of all care of the office. He continued to be a Trustee as long as he lived, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the Academy grow to be the University of Philadelphia.

In 1751, a free, or charity school was attached to the Academy, for the instruction of poor children gratis in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and within a year a hundred such children were in attendance.

Franklin now flattered himself that, with "the sufficient though moderate" fortune he had acquired, he had purchased leisure, for the rest of his days, to devote to "philosophical studies and amusements." He purchased Dr. Spence's apparatus, and proceeded with his electrical experiments with great alacrity. But the public had found out his remarkable executive abilities, and determined to employ his leisure in their service. The Governor made him Commissioner of the Peace; the city corporation chose him to be one of the Common Council, and soon after Alderman; and the citizens at large elected him to represent them in the Assembly.

"This latter station," he says, "was the more agreeable to me," because, "I conceived my becoming a member

would enlarge my power of doing good. I would not, however, insinuate," he adds, "that my ambition was not flattered by these promotions. It certainly was, for, considering my low beginning, they were great things to me; and they were still more pleasing, as being so many spontaneous testimonies of the public good opinion, and by me entirely unsolicited."

He was forty-four years of age when these public honors began to be heaped upon him. His aged father and mother, and the whole family, shared his gratification. In 1751, about a fortnight after his election as alderman, his mother wrote to him and his wife as follows :

"LOVING SON AND DAUGHTER,

"I am glad to hear you are so well respected in your town for them to choose you as Alderman, although I don't know what it means or what the better you will be of it besides the honor of it. I hope you will look up to God, and thank him for all his good providences towards you. He has granted you much in that place, and I am very thankful for it. I hope that you will carry well, so that you may be liked in all your posts. I am very weak and short-breathed, so that I can't sit up to write much, although I sleep well nights and my cough is better.

"From your loving mother,

"ABIAH FRANKLIN."

Mrs. Mecom, Franklin's youngest sister, added a postscript :

"I rejoice with you in all your prosperity, and doubt not but you will be greater blessings to the world as he bestows upon you greater honors."

Franklin was elected to the Assembly every

year for ten years, "without," he says, "my ever asking any elector for his vote, or signifying, either directly or indirectly, any desire of being chosen."

One is strongly reminded of another illustrious son of Massachusetts, so unlike him in many respects, but so like him in political honesty, who never sought, but was always sought by, office — Charles Sumner.

Another mark of regard for Franklin, on his election to the House, was the appointment of his son as Clerk of the body.

About this time Franklin and the Speaker of the House were appointed Commissioners, in company with some members of the Council, to treat with the Indians, at Carlisle. In order that the treaty might be properly conducted, the Indians were told, that if they would continue sober during the negotiation, they should be well supplied with rum when it was over. The treaty was concluded to mutual satisfaction, and then the rum was demanded and given.

"This," says Franklin, "was in the afternoon. They were near one hundred men, women, and children, and were lodged in temporary cabins, built in the form of a square; they were all drunk, men and women, quarrelling and fighting. Their dark-colored bodies, half-naked, seen only by the gloomy light of the bonfire, running after and beating one another with fire-brands, accompanied by their horrid yellings, formed a scene the most resembling our idea of hell that could well be imagined; there was no appeasing the tumult, and we retired to our lodgings. At midnight a

number of them came thundering at our door, demanding more rum, of which we took no notice.

“The next day, sensible they had misbehaved in giving us that disturbance, they sent three of their old counsellors to make their apology. The orator acknowledged the fault, but laid it upon the rum; and endeavored to excuse the rum, by saying, ‘The Great Spirit, who made all things, made everything for some use, and whatever use he designed anything for, that use it should always be put to. Now, when he made rum, he said, “Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with;” and it must be so.”’

Rum, Franklin adds, had already annihilated all the tribes that formerly inhabited the sea-coast; and it has since swept off hundreds of thousands in the interior.

In 1751, Franklin became interested in a benevolent project, the establishment of a hospital for the benefit of poor sick persons, whether inhabitants of the provinces or strangers. The plan originated with Dr. Thomas Bond, a particular friend of his, but, as the proposal was a new thing in America, he met with little success. Of course the next step was to get Franklin’s counsel and assistance. “I am often asked,” he said to him, “by those to whom I propose subscribing, ‘Have you consulted Franklin on this business? And what does he think of it?’ And when I tell them that I dare not, supposing it rather out of your line, they do not subscribe, but say, *they will consider it.*” Franklin immediately saw the importance of such an institution, and promised every assistance in

his power. In the first place, as his custom was, he endeavored to prepare the way for a subscription by writing on the subject in the newspapers. He then undertook to solicit subscriptions, and with good success; but as these were not sufficient, he got a petition in behalf of the hospital before the Assembly. Opposition arose from the country members, who looked upon the project as serviceable only to the city, and even questioned whether a majority of the citizens approved of it.

But Franklin assured them that two thousand pounds could be raised by voluntary donations, which the opponents of the measure considered a wild statement. He then drew up a bill for an act of incorporation, containing the condition that when two thousand pounds should be raised by contributions, the Speaker be authorized to sign an order on the provincial treasurer for the same amount; making four thousand pounds in all. The bill was passed; and the condition furnishing an additional motive for giving, every man's donation being doubled, the subscriptions soon exceeded the requisite sum. With the money thus obtained, a suitable building was erected, and the institution began its beneficent work. Such was the origin of the Pennsylvania Hospital. While Franklin was thus prompt to respond to the call of benevolence, he was not blind to the necessity of sound judgment and prudence in caring for the poor and suffering. In a letter to his friend Peter Collinson, he said :

"I have heard it remarked that the poor in Protestant countries, on the continent of Europe, are generally more industrious than those of Popish countries. May not the more numerous foundations in the latter for the relief of the poor have some effect toward rendering them less provident? To relieve the misfortunes of our fellow creatures is concurring with the Deity; it is god-like; but, if we provide encouragement for laziness, and support for folly, may we not be found fighting against the order of God and nature, which perhaps has appointed want and misery as the proper punishment for, and cautions against, as well as necessary consequences of, idleness and extravagance? Whenever we attempt to amend the scheme of Providence, and to interfere with the government of the world, we had need be very circumspect, lest we do more harm than good. In New England they once thought blackbirds useless, and mischievous to the corn. They made efforts to destroy them. The consequence was, the blackbirds were diminished; but a kind of worm which devoured their grass, and which the blackbirds used to feed on, increased prodigiously; then, finding their loss in grass much greater than their saving in corn, they wished again for their blackbirds."

Franklin's busy mind now thought of improving the streets of the city of his adoption.

"Our city," he says, "though laid out with a beautiful regularity, the streets large, straight, and crossing each other at right angles, had the disgrace of suffering those streets to remain long unpaved, and in wet weather the wheels of heavy carriages ploughed them into a quagmire, so that it was difficult to cross them; and in dry weather, the dust was oppressive. I had lived near what was called the Jersey Market, and saw with pain the inhabitants wading in mud, while purchasing provisions. A strip of ground down the middle of that market was at length paved with brick, so

that, being once in the market, they had firm footing; but were often over shoes in dirt to get there. By talking and writing on the subject, I was at length instrumental in getting the street paved with stone between the market and the brick foot pavement, that was on the side next the houses. This, for some time gave an easy access to the market dry-shod; but, the rest of the street not being paved, whenever a carriage came out of the mud upon this pavement, it shook off and left its dirt upon it, and it was soon covered with mire, which was not removed, the city as yet having no scavengers.

After some inquiry, I found a poor industrious man, who was willing to undertake keeping the pavement clear, by sweeping it twice a week, carrying off the dirt from before all the neighbors' doors, for the sum of sixpence per month, to be paid by each house. I then wrote and printed a paper setting forth the advantages to the neighborhood, that might be obtained from this small expense. I sent one of these papers to each house, and in a day or two went round to see who would subscribe an agreement to pay these sixpence; it was unanimously signed, and for a time well executed. All the inhabitants of the city were delighted with the cleanliness of the pavement that surrounded the market, it being a convenience to all, and this raised a general desire to have all the streets paved; and made the people more willing to submit to a tax for that purpose."

After some time Franklin drew up a bill for paving the city, and brought it into the Assembly. It afterwards passed, with an additional provision, by another person, for lighting the streets.

Thus the poor boy, who, less than thirty years before, had walked its streets a stranger, with

his roll under his arm, introduced one of the greatest improvements of its thoroughfares.

In 1753, on the death of the Postmaster General of the colonies, Franklin and William Hunter were appointed to succeed him, with an allowance each of three hundred pounds, if they could clear that amount from the profits of the office. Hitherto the office had been poorly managed, but Franklin introduced such valuable improvements, and conducted the business with such energy and prudence, that, after four years, the income not only paid their salaries, but yielded a clear revenue to the crown.

Franklin had now really become a great man, known not only at home but abroad; and when the business of the post-office took him to New England in 1753, the college at Cambridge conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts, an honor received already from Yale College.

But with all his honors, literary and political, he ever retained a charming simplicity of character. He believed in the dignity of labor, and respected the working class.

"The merchants of Philadelphia," about this time, says his grandson, "set up an assembly for dancing, and desiring to assume a rank above the mechanics, they at first proposed, among the rules for regulating the assembly, 'that no mechanic or mechanic's wife or daughter, should be admitted on any terms. The rules being shown by a manager to Franklin for his opinion, he remarked that one of them excluded God Almighty. 'How so?' said the manager. 'Because,' replied Franklin, 'he is notoriously the greatest



mechanic in the universe, having, as the Scripture testifies, made all things, and that by weight and measure.' The gentlemen became ashamed of their rule, and struck it out."

Franklin was always averse to extravagance and luxury. But he took a common-sense view of the subject, and would not undertake to regulate the style of living, by law. In a letter to a friend, written many years after, he said: "Is not the hope of being able one day to purchase and enjoy luxuries, a great spur to labor and industry? May not luxury, therefore, produce more than it consumes, if without such a spur people would be, as they are naturally enough inclined to be, lazy and indolent?" And to illustrate his meaning, he related an incident which occurred about this time.

"The skipper of a Shallop, employed between Cape May and Philadelphia, had done me some small service, for which he refused to be paid. My wife, understanding that he had a daughter, sent her a present of a new-fashioned cap. Three years after, this skipper being at my house with an old farmer of Cape May, his passenger, he mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it. 'But,' said he, 'it proved a dear cap to our congregation.' 'How so?' 'When my daughter appeared with it at meeting, it was so much admired that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia; and my wife and I computed that the whole could not have cost less than a hundred pounds.' 'True,' said the farmer, 'but you do not tell all the story. I think the cap was nevertheless an advantage to us, for it was the first thing that put our girls upon knitting

worsted mittens for sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy caps and ribbons there; and you know that that industry has continued, and is likely to continue and increase to a much greater value, and answer better purposes.'

"Upon the whole," adds Franklin, "I was more reconciled to this little piece of luxury, since not only the girls were made happier by having fine caps, but the Philadelphians by a supply of warm mittens."

## CHAPTER XXI.

*War with France.—The Six Nations.—Congress at Albany.—Description of Albany.—Union of the Colonies.—Franklin's Plan.—It is Rejected.—Device of a Snake.—Letter to Catherine Ray.—His Love for New England.—British Jealousy.—General Braddock.—Franklin Waits upon Him.—A Whirlwind.—Procuring Horses and Wagons.—Supplies for Subaltern Officers.—Provides Supplies for Braddock.—Conversation with Braddock.—The General's Defeat and Death.—Plan for Improving the German Population.*

SIX years have now passed since the peace of *Aix-la-Chapelle*, which put an end to the French and Indian war. In 1754, war with France was again apprehended. The great question had yet to be settled, which should rule this continent, England or France. Fortunately the Iroquois tribes, also called the Six Nations,—the Cayugas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras—who were among the most powerful of the Indian race, were firm friends of the English. The British government accordingly ordered a congress of commissioners from the different colonies to assemble at Albany, to confer

with the Six Nations concerning the means of defence against the French. There came together twenty-five leading men from seven colonies; among them Thomas Hutchinson, afterwards governor and historian of Massachusetts, and Benjamin Franklin.

Albany was then a little Dutch town, of three hundred houses and twenty-six hundred inhabitants. It was protected by the Hudson on the one side, and by a picket-fence on the other, and had a stone fort.

War was, in fact, already upon the colonies, and the necessity of a closer union among them, was urgent. A plan to effect this, drawn up by Franklin on his way to Albany, which provided for a general government to be administered by a President-general, appointed and supported by the Crown, and for a grand council, or congress, to be chosen by the assemblies of the several colonies, was unanimously adopted. But it was not approved by the government in England, as being, in its opinion, too democratic, nor by the colonial assemblies, for the opposite reason, as favoring, they believed, a central power, adverse to their more popular character. Before going to Albany, Franklin had printed in his newspaper a woodcut, made doubtless with his own hand, representing the necessity of union among the colonies, not only for defence, but for existence, by the figure of a snake cut into separate pieces, and an inscription underneath, "Unite or Die."

But arguments and devices could not persuade

the colonies to sacrifice a particle of their separate independence, and it was not, in fact, till 1787, more than thirty years later, that, after a bitter experience and long discussions, the colonies, then become States, agreed to a constitution which combined a strong government and popular liberty.

Franklin believed that the adoption of his plan of union would have so strengthened the colonies, as to have prevented the need of troops from England, the subsequent taxation of America, and the bloody contest which it occasioned. "The best public measures," he said, "are seldom adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the occasion."

The plan for defence appointed by the home government was, that the governors of the provinces, with some members of their respective councils, should meet and order the raising of troops, building of forts, and drawing on the treasury of Great Britain for the expense, which was afterwards to be refunded by an act of Parliament, laying a taxation on America. That tax on America accomplished more than was intended!

Being in Boston the next year, Franklin talked over the government plan with Governor Shirley, and afterwards put on paper his objections to it,\* objections which involved the American Revolution.

On his return to Philadelphia, he wrote under

\* See Sparks, pps. 22-26.

date of 4th March, 1755, to Catherine Ray, on Block Island, a young lady, a daughter of a friend. The letter, gracefully written, shows how strong was his attachment to the home of his boyhood, and his kindness of heart.

“Your kind letter of January 20th is but just come to hand, and I take this first opportunity of acknowledging the favor. It gives me great pleasure to hear that you got home safe and well that day. I thought too much was hazarded when I saw you put off to sea in that very little skiff, tossed by every wave. But the call was strong and just, a sick parent. I stood on the shore, and looked after you till I could no longer distinguish you even with my glass; then returned to your sister's, praying for your safe passage. Toward evening all agreed that you must certainly be arrived before that time, the weather having been so favorable; which made me more easy and cheerful, for I had been truly concerned for you.

“I left New England slowly, and with great reluctance. Short days' journeys, and loitering visits on the road for three or four weeks, manifested my unwillingness to quit a country in which I drew my first breath, spent my earliest and most pleasant days, and had now received so many fresh marks of the people's goodness and benevolence, in the kind and affectionate treatment I had everywhere met with. I almost forgot I had a home, till I was more than half way towards it, till I had, one by one, parted with all my New England friends, and was got into the western borders of Connecticut, among mere strangers. Then like an old man, who, having buried all he loved in the world, begins to think of heaven, I began to think of home; and, as I drew nearer, I found the attraction stronger and stronger. My diligence and speed increased with my impatience. I drove

on violently, and made such long stretches, that a very few days brought me to my own house, and to the arms of my good old wife and children, where I remain, thanks to God, well and happy.

“Persons subject to the *hyp*, complain of the northeast wind, as increasing their malady. But since you promised to send me kisses in that wind, and I find you as good as your word, it is to me the gayest wind that blows, and gives me the best spirits. I write this during a northeast storm of snow, the greatest we have had this winter. Your favors come mixed with the snowy fleeces.”

The British government was now already very jealous of the colonies, lest they should become too military, and too conscious of their own strength. Rather than to trust them to raise troops among themselves, even for their own defence, they sent over General Braddock, in 1755, with two regiments of regular English troops, for that purpose. He landed at Alexandria, and thence marched to Fredericktown, where he halted for carriages. He was much prejudiced against the people and the colonial legislatures. The Assembly of Pennsylvania, wishing to disabuse his mind, and convince him of their readiness to serve him, requested Franklin, not as a member of the House, but as Postmaster General, to wait upon the general, under the guise of facilitating the dispatches between him and the governors of the several provinces; they proposing to pay the expense of such correspondence. In company with Franklin, were the governors of New York and Massachusetts, and his son

William. During the journey of one hundred and twenty miles to Fredericktown, an incident of scientific interest occurred, which Franklin recorded in a letter to a friend :

“ Being in Maryland, riding with Col. Tasker, and some other gentlemen, to his country-seat, where I and my son were entertained by that amiable and worthy man, with great hospitality and kindness, we saw in the vale below us, a small whirlwind beginning in the road, and showing itself by the dust it raised and contained. It appeared in the form of a sugar-loaf, spinning on the point, moving up the hill towards us, enlarging as it came forward. When it passed by us, its smaller part near the ground appeared no bigger than a common barrel; but, widening upwards, it seemed, at forty or fifty feet high, to be twenty or thirty feet in diameter. The rest of the company stood looking after it; but, my curiosity being stronger, I followed it, riding close by its side, and observed its licking up, in its progress, all the dust that was under its smaller part. As it is a common opinion that a shot fired through a water-spout, will break it, I tried to break this little whirlwind, by striking my whip frequently through it, but without any effect. Soon after, it quitted the road and took into the woods, growing every moment larger and stronger, raising, instead of dust, the old dry leaves, with which the ground was thickly covered, and making a great noise with them and the branches of the trees, bending some tall trees round in a circle, swiftly and very surprisingly, though the progressive motion of the whirl was not so swift but that a man on foot might have kept space with it; but the circular motion was amazingly rapid. By the leaves it was now filled with, I could plainly perceive that the current of air they were driven by, moved upwards in a spiral line; and when I saw the passing whirl continue entire, after leaving the bodies and trunks of



large trees which it had enveloped, I no longer wondered that my whip had no effect on it in its smaller state. I accompanied it about three quarters of a mile, till some limbs of dead trees, broken off by the whirl, flying about and falling near me, made me more apprehensive of danger; and then I stopped, looking at the top of it as it went on, which was visible, by means of the leaves contained in it, for a great height above the trees. Many of the leaves, as they got loose from the upper and widest part, were scattered in the wind; but so great was their height, that they appeared no bigger than flies. My son, who was by this time come up with me, followed the whirlwind till it left the woods and crossed an old tobacco-field, where, finding neither dust nor leaves to take up, it gradually became invisible below, as it went away over that field. The course of the general wind then blowing was along with us as we travelled, and the progressive motion of the whirlwind was in a direction nearly opposite, though it did not keep a straight line, nor was its progressive motion uniform, it making little sallies on either hand as it went, proceeding sometimes faster and sometimes slower, and seeming sometimes, for a few seconds, almost stationary, then starting forward pretty fast again.

“When we rejoined the company, they were admiring the vast height of the leaves, now brought by the common wind over our heads. These leaves accompanied us as we travelled, some falling down now and then about us, and some not reaching the ground till we had gone nearly three miles from the place where we first saw the whirlwind begin. Upon my asking Col. Tasker if such whirlwinds were common in Maryland, he answered pleasantly, ‘No, not at all common; but we got this on purpose to treat Mr. Franklin.’ And a very high treat it was.”

Arrived at Fredericktown, “We found the general,” says Franklin, “waiting impatiently for the return of those whom he had sent through the back parts of Maryland and

Virginia, to collect wagons. I staid with him several days, dined with him daily, and had full opportunities of removing his prejudices."

One hundred and twenty-five wagons were needed for conveying the stores and baggage. By the returns brought in, when Franklin was about leaving, it appeared that only twenty-five, and some of these unfit for service, had been obtained. The general and all the officers expressed much surprise, and declared the expedition impossible, and exclaimed against the ministers for ignorantly sending them into a country so destitute of the means of conveyance.

"I happened," says Franklin, who was always *happening* to say wise things, "to say that I thought it was a pity they had not been landed in Pennsylvania, almost every farmer there having his wagon. The general eagerly laid hold of my words, and said, 'Then you, sir, who are a man of interest there, can probably procure them for us; and I beg you will undertake it.'" The terms were settled; and as soon as Franklin reached Lancaster, he published an advertisement, which produced "a great and sudden effect."

He received of Braddock about eight hundred pounds, as advance money, to the owners of wagons; but the sum being insufficient, Franklin advanced upwards of two hundred pounds. In two weeks one hundred and fifty wagons, with two hundred and fifty-nine baggage horses were on their way to the camp. Franklin also gave

his bond as security for indemnity to the owners, in case of the loss of any horses or wagons.

While he was at the camp, supping one evening with the officers of Col. Dunbar's regiment, that officer expressed to him his concern for the subalterns, whose small income rendered them unable to lay in stores enough for their long march through the wilderness. Franklin immediately wrote to the Committee of the Assembly, who had at their disposal some public money, urging a present to these officers of suitable supplies; including a list of articles drawn up by his son. The Committee approved; and twenty parcels, well packed, were placed on as many horses, one parcel, with the horse, for each officer. Each parcel contained

6 lbs. Loaf Sugar,	1 Gloucester Cheese,
6 " Muscavado Sugar,	1 keg containing 20 lbs. good
1 " Green Tea,	butter,
1 " Bohea,	2 doz. Old Madeira Wine,
6 " Ground Coffee,	2 gals. Jamaica Spirits,
6 " Chocolate,	1 bottle Flour of Mustard,
1-2 chest Best White Biscuit,	2 Well-cured Hams,
1-2 lb. Pepper,	1-2 doz. Dried Tongue,
1 qt. White Vinegar,	6 lbs. Rice,
6 lbs. Raisins.	

Gen. Braddock was highly satisfied with the efficient help rendered by Franklin. At his request, Franklin also undertook to provide and send supplies after him, advancing for the purpose more than a thousand pounds; for the payment of which Braddock immediately returned

an order. But what he had previously advanced, he never received.

"This general," says Franklin, "was, I think, a brave man, and might probably have made a figure as a good officer in some European war. But he had too much self-confidence, too high an opinion of regular troops, and too mean a one of both Americans and Indians. George Croghan, an Indian interpreter, joined him on his march with one hundred of those people, who might have been of great use to his army, as guides and scouts, if he had treated them kindly; but he slighted and neglected them, and they gradually left him.

"In conversation with him one day, he was giving me some account of his intended progress. 'After taking Fort Duquesne,' said he, 'I am to proceed to Niagara; and having taken that, to Frontenac, if the season will allow time, and I suppose it will, for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days, and then I see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara.' Having before resolved in my mind the long line his army must make in their march by a very narrow road, to be cut for them through the woods and bushes, and also what I had read of a former defeat of fifteen hundred French, who invaded the Illinois country, I had conceived some trouble and some fears for the event of the campaign. But I ventured to suggest the danger from Indian ambuscades to a slender line, nearly four miles long, exposed to sudden attack on the flank and along its sides.

"He smiled at my ignorance, and replied, 'These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the King's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.'

"The boastful general, with Col. George Washington as his *aid-de-camp*, crossed the mountains for Fort Duquesne, in the month of June, with about two thousand men. The

terrible defeat which befel him, from his neglect to guard against surprise, need not be minutely described. He himself was slain, more than half his army were killed or wounded, and the rest, panic-stricken, made a precipitate retreat. The fugitives, reaching Col. Dunbar's camp, who had been left some distance behind, to follow later with the heavier baggage, communicated their terror to him and his troops. He had over a thousand men, but so overwhelmed was he with fright, that he ordered all the stores and ammunition to be deserted, in order to facilitate his escape to the settlements. There requests met him from the governors of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, that he would post his troops on the frontier, to afford some protection to the inhabitants. But, as if fearing that Indians would start out from every tree and bush, he rushed on through the more unsettled country, and never felt himself safe till he arrived at Philadelphia, where the inhabitants could protect him and his valiant army." No wonder Franklin adds, that "this first transaction gave us, Americans, the first suspicion, that our exalted ideas of the power of British regular troops, had not been well founded."

This rout gave Franklin a great deal of trouble, for the owners of the wagons and horses came upon him for the valuation which he had given bond to pay. In the necessary delay of settlement, some of them even sued him, and he would have been ruined, the sum demanded amounting to twenty thousand pounds, had not Gen. Shirley, who was then governor of Massachusetts, and commander-in-chief of his Majesty's forces in America, ordered an examination of the accounts, and immediate payment to be made. But Franklin never received the full amount that was due him.

Franklin loved best the arts of peace, and about this time he was much engaged in a plan for improving the condition of the German population in the colonies. It was proposed to provide missionaries and teachers, and to render such relief as might be needed. The majority of German immigrants at that period were very ignorant, and full of prejudices against the people of English descent. "Few of their children in the country," says Franklin; "know English."

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Meanness of the Proprietaries.—Discord between the Governor and the Assembly.—Effect of Braddock's Defeat in England.—Defence of the Frontier.—Franklin takes the Field.—Raises Troops and Builds Forts.—The Moravian Settlements.—Indian Massacres.—The Moravia Bishop.—The March.—Lloyd's Description.—Indian Device.—Letter to His Wife.—Summoned to Philadelphia.—Elected Colonel.—Effect of a Salute.—An Escort.—The Proprietor Offended.—Letter to His Wife.—Description.—Buffon.—Franklin's Theory of Electricity assailed in France.—Does not Reply.—His Plan of Proving Identity of Electricity and Lightning.—Dolibard.—Lightning from the Clouds.—A Kite.—Proves His Theory.—The Royal Society.—A Gold Medal.—Affection for His Relatives.—Letter to Mrs. Mecom.—Benny.—Antigua.—Letter to Mrs. Mecom.—Jemmy's Dress.*

MONEY was needed for the defence of the province, but the Assembly would not pass bills for that purpose, with a clause exempting the proprietary estates from their share of the burden. The governor again and again remonstrated

with them, and rejected their money-bills as not made according to his wishes, but they stood firm by their rights and the rights of the people. It was only reasonable, they declared, that all who were to be protected should join in meeting the expense. The meanness and injustice of the proprietaries was loudly proclaimed in England, when the news of Braddock's defeat reached there. It was openly said, If these men obstruct the defence of the province, they forfeit their right to it. This frightened them into sending over an order to add five thousand pounds of their money to what might be given by the Assembly. This was accepted for the time in place of their share in the general tax. Franklin was appointed one of the commissioners for disposing of the money, which amounted to sixty thousand pounds. He also carried through the House a bill for establishing a voluntary militia, to which the Quakers made no great opposition, as they were expressly exempted.

Hitherto Franklin had served the province in a civil capacity, or as counsellor in military affairs; he was now to take the field as a military commander. The northwestern frontier of the province was infested by the enemy, and the governor prevailed on Franklin to take charge of its defence, by raising troops, and building a line of forts. He was invested with the powers of a general, and was authorized to appoint such persons for officers as he thought competent. He soon had five hundred and sixty men under his command, his son acting as *aid-de-camp*.



The Moravian settlement, in the County of Northampton, was then suffering terribly from the Indians. Gnadenhutten, one of their villages, had been burned, and the inhabitants massacred. It was proposed to build a fort there, and preparatory to that Franklin assembled the companies at Bethlehem, the chief establishment of these people. He found it in a good state of defence.

"The principal buildings," he says, "were defended by a stockade; they had purchased a quantity of arms and ammunition from New York, and had even placed quantities of small paving-stones between the windows of their high stone houses, for their women to throw them down upon the heads of any Indian that should attempt to force an entrance into them. The armed brethren, too, kept watch, and relieved each other on guard, as methodically as in any garrison town. In conversation with the bishop, Spangenberg, I mentioned my surprise; for, knowing that they had obtained an act of Parliament exempting them from military duties in the colonies, I had supposed they were conscientiously scrupulous about bearing arms. He answered me, that it was not one of their established principles; but that, at the time of their obtaining that act, it was thought to be a principle with many of their people. On this occasion, however, they, to their surprise, found it adopted by but a few."

It was the beginning of January when Franklin, having sent two detachments in different directions to build forts, set out himself for Gnadenhutten, the tools, stores and baggage being carried in five wagons.

Just before leaving Bethlehem, eleven farmers, who had been driven from their plantations by the Indians, came to him requesting firearms that

they might go back and bring off their cattle.

It rained nearly all day. There were no habitations on the road, till they arrived, near night, at the house of a German, "where, and in his barn," says Franklin, "we were all huddled together as wet as water could make us."

It was worse for the poor farmers, ten out of the eleven having been killed that day by their savage enemies, their guns being rendered useless by the rain, which wet the priming.

The next day Franklin arrived at Gnadenhutten, where he found, says Lloyd, who was one of the party, "a scene of horror and destruction.

"Where lately flourished a happy and peaceful village, it is now all silent and desolate; the houses burnt; the inhabitants butchered in the most shocking manner; their mangled bodies, for want of funerals, exposed to birds and beasts of prey; and all kinds of mischief perpetrated, that wanton cruelty can invent;" and he adds, "Mr. Franklin will, at least, deserve a statue for his prudence, justice, humanity, and, above all, for his patience."

First of all, the commander buried the dead, and not till the next day did he commence work on the fort. In a week's time the fort was finished, a flag was hoisted, and a swivel mounted, which was fired, to inform the Indians, if any were within hearing, what means of defence were on hand.

Some of the days were rainy, and then no work was done; and Franklin observed that on the work-days they were good-natured and cheerful, but on idle days in bad humor. He

was reminded, he says, of a sea-captain, whose rule it was to keep his men constantly at work ; and when his mate once told him that they had done everything, and there was nothing further to employ them about, "Oh," said he, "make them scour the anchor."

From the fort, Franklin went out with parties to scour the adjacent country. No Indians were to be seen, but Franklin's observant eye noticed a contrivance of theirs, where some had been encamped, to prevent the light of their fires discovering where they were.

"They had dug holes, in the ground, about three feet in diameter, and somewhat deeper; we found where they had, with their hatchets, cut off the charcoal from the sides of burnt logs lying in the woods. With these coals they had made small fires in the bottom of the holes, and we observed among the weeds and grass the prints of their bodies, made by their lying all round, with their legs hanging down in the holes to keep their feet warm."

During his absence, Franklin kept up a lively communication with home. The day he started for Gnadenhutten, Jan. 15, he wrote to his wife, whom he addressed as "My dear child," telling her to make herself easy about him, and that he hoped within a fortnight to be in Philadelphia. Ten days later, he wrote to her :

"We have enjoyed your roast beef, and this day began on the roast veal. . . . Your citizens, that have their dinners hot and hot, know nothing of good eating. We find it in much greater perfection when the kitchen is four-score miles from the dining-room. The apples are extremely wel-

come, and do bravely to eat after our salt pork; the minced pies are not yet come to hand, but I suppose we shall find them among the things expected up from Bethlehem on Tuesday. . . . As to our lodging, it is on deal feather-beds, in warm blankets, and much more comfortable than when we lodged at our inn, the first night after we left home; for, the woman being about to put very damp sheets on the bed, we desired her to air them first; half an hour afterwards, she told me the bed was ready, and the sheets *well aired*. I got into bed, but jumped out immediately, finding them as cold as death, and partly frozen. She had *aired* them indeed, but it was out upon the hedge. I was forced to wrap myself up in my great-coat and woolen trowsers."

Another letter, five days later, concludes with "I am, dear girl, your loving husband."

While at Bethlehem, he inquired into the customs of the Moravians, and attended some of their religious services.

He had no sooner completed the forts, and stored them with provisions, than he was summoned back to Philadelphia, by a letter from the Governor. The Assembly had been convened, and his presence was much desired. He turned over his command to Col. Clapham, an English officer experienced in Indian war, and directed his face toward home, having an escort back as far as Bethlehem. Here he rested a few days. "The first night," he says, "lying in a good bed, I could hardly sleep, it was so different from my hard lodging on the floor of a hut at Gnadenhutten, with only a blanket or two."

Being returned to Philadelphia, he found that the inhabitants, all but the Quakers, had formed themselves into military companies, and chosen their officers. Franklin was made colonel of the regiment, which numbered about twelve hundred men, with a company of artillery. The first time he reviewed them, they gave him a salute before his door, which shook down and broke several glasses of his electrical apparatus. His new honors, he says, proved not much less brittle, for the law under which the Association had been organized being soon repealed in England, all the commissions were broken.

"During this short term of my colonelship," says Franklin, "being about to set out on a journey to Virginia, the officers of my regiment took it into their heads to escort me out of town. Just as I was getting on horseback, they came to my door, between thirty and forty, mounted, and all in their uniforms." He was taken by surprise, and "a good deal chagrined at their appearance, especially as, when they began to move, they drew their swords, and rode with them naked all the way."

The Proprietor was greatly offended; no such honor, he said, had been paid to him, when in the province, or to any of his governors; and, moreover, such display was proper only for princes of the blood royal.

The Proprietor, Thomas Penn, had always disliked Franklin for opposing in the Assembly his exemption from taxation, and now his hostility was much increased. He endeavored to effect Franklin's removal from his office of Postmaster General; but in vain.

During his absence of two months in Virginia, on the business of the post-office, Franklin did not forget his home. He wrote to his wife from Fredericktown, March 21st, addressing her again as "My dear child." Peter, one of his servants, had been taken sick, and Franklin tells how he bled him, and dosed him with camomile tea. He also wished that Dr. Bond would send him some of his good pills by post. "My duty to mother, and love to Sally [his daughter], Debby, Gracy, &c., not forgetting the Goody. I am, my dear child, your loving husband." On the 30th, he writes from Williamsburg.

**"MY DEAR CHILD:**

"I wrote to you *via* New York the day after my arrival, acquainting you that I had a fine journey and passage down the Bay. . . . I have been well ever since, quite clear of the dizziness I complained of, and as gay as a bird, not beginning yet to long for home, the worry of perpetual business being yet fresh in my memory. Mr. Hunter [joint Postmaster General] is much better than I expected to find him, and we are daily employed in settling our affairs. About the end of the week we are to take a tour into the country. Virginia is a pleasant country, now in full spring; the people obliging and polite. . . .

"I am, dear Debby,

**"YOUR LOVING HUSBAND."**

We have already spoken of the manner in which Franklin's important experiments and discoveries were at first received in England. A copy of his papers, soon after, fell into the hands of the philosopher Buffon, who got them

translated into French. They were assailed by the Abbé Nollet, who had formed a different theory of electricity. He could not believe that such a work came from America, or that such a person as Franklin really existed. The whole thing was a fabrication. But, being convinced of our philosopher's existence, he wrote a volume defending his own theory, and denying the validity of Franklin's experiments.

At first Franklin thought of replying, but concluded to let his papers "shift for themselves;" which he was afterwards glad of, as a friend, a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, took up his cause and defended him. Franklin's book began to attract universal attention. It was translated into Italian, German and Latin, and its views were gradually adopted throughout Europe. His opponent, the Abbé, lived to see himself the last of his sect, with a single exception, one lone disciple still cleaving to him.

Franklin, years before, had suggested and partially proved the identity of electricity and lightning, and had indicated a method of determining the question.

"On the top of some high tower or steeple, place a kind of sentry-box, big enough to contain a man and an electric stand. From the middle of the stand let an iron rod rise, and pass bending out of the door, and then upright twenty or thirty feet, pointed very sharp at the end. If the electrical stand be kept clean and dry, a man standing on it, when such clouds are passing low, might be electrified and afford sparks, the rod drawing fire to him from a cloud. If

any danger to the man should be apprehended (though I think there would be none), let him stand on the floor of his box, and now and then bring near to the rod, the loop of a wire that has one end fastened to the leads, he holding it by a wax handle; so the sparks, if the rod is electrified, will strike from the rod to the wire, and not affect him."

America then furnishing no such suitable place for the experiment, it was deferred, till it had been made by Dalibard in France. He drew lightning from the clouds, and demonstrated the truth of Franklin's theory. De Lor, also, repeated what he called the *Philadelphia Experiments*, before the king and court, and crowds of Parisians.

Dalibard's experiment was made on the 10th of May, 1752. The next month Franklin, without knowing what success had followed his suggestion in France, himself completed his great discovery in Philadelphia. He had waited some five years for the erection of a spire, by means of which he could verify his theory, first conceived in 1747, but now it occurred to him that by means of a kite, he might more readily have communication with the clouds. He fastened two cross sticks to a silk handkerchief, the upright one having an iron point. The string was of hemp, except what was held by the hand, which was of silk. A key was attached to the string, just above the silk. Every thing being ready, he watched for a thunder-cloud, and seeing one approaching, he went forth into a field in the suburbs of the city, accompanied only by



his son, for fear of the ridicule that might come from a failure. To avoid the rain, he went under a shed; the kite was sent forth on its great mission; but there was no response from the cloud. He looks more carefully at the string. There is a singular appearance, similar to what he had noticed in his electrical experiments — the loose fibres assume an erect position. There must be electricity there. He applies his knuckle to the key, and receives a strong spark! The thunder-cloud is a Leyden jar. His theory is true!

We know that Franklin was not a man to easily give way to raptures, but there can be no doubt his emotions were, at that moment, of the most exquisite kind. The fear of possible failure had given place to the exhilaration of certainty, and what a certainty! Again and again he draws sparks from the key, no longer now to prove his speculation, but for the simple delight of witnessing the wonderful phenomenon. He knows he has made a great discovery, but as yet he is ignorant that his fame has spread over Europe. The next ship brings him the agreeable intelligence. Even the Royal Society of London has hastened to correct its blunder. That learned body, having learned that the theory of the American philosopher had been proved in France, had come to the wise conclusion that he was not a person to be laughed at. They had voted to publish in their Transactions those very papers which they had once rejected

as unworthy of notice. Some of the members had repeated the experiments of drawing lightning from the clouds by a pointed rod. To crown his triumph, the next year, 1753, without any application from himself, he was chosen a member, and excused the customary fee of twenty-five guineas; the Transactions were ever after sent him gratis, and he was voted a gold medal, the President accompanying the delivery of it with a eulogistic speech.

With all his public cares upon him, and all his public honors, Franklin ever retained a lively interest in the welfare of his relatives. He always looked after their private interests, and, if an opportunity offered, he had no scruples about putting them into some public office. Soon after his return from Virginia, under date of June 28th, 1756, he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Mecom, about her son Benny, whom her brother had established as a printer in Antigua. Her letter was full of thanks, to which he replied:

“DEAR SISTER:

“I received your letter of extravagant thanks, which put me in mind of the story of the member of Parliament, who began one of his speeches with saying he thanked God that he was born and bred a Presbyterian; on which another took leave to observe that the gentleman must needs be of a most grateful disposition, since he was thankful for such very small matters.”

Benny seems to have become dissatisfied with the arrangement made by his uncle, and had resolved to quit Antigua. His mother was anx-

ious to know what had led the young man to take this apparently hasty step, and to her inquiry, her brother made reply :

“ When I set him up at Antigua, he was to have the use of the printing-house, allowing me one-third part of the profits. After this, finding him diligent and careful, for his encouragement, I relinquished that agreement, and let him know that, as you were removed into a dearer house, if he paid you yearly a certain sum, I forget what it was, towards discharging your rent, and another small sum to me, in sugar and rum, for my family use, he need keep no farther accounts of the profits, but should enjoy all the rest himself. I cannot remember what the whole of both payments amounted to, but I think they did not exceed twenty pounds a year.

“ The truth is, I intended from the first to give him the printing-house; but, as he was young and inexperienced in the world, I thought it best not to do it immediately; but to keep him a little dependent for a time, to check the flighty unsteadiness of temper which, on several occasions, he had discovered; and what I received from him I concluded to lay out in new types, that, when I should give it to him entirely, it might be worthy his acceptance; and, if I should die first, I put it in my will that the letters should be all new cast for him.”

But the proposal of paying an annual sum did not suit the young man; he wanted his uncle to name a certain sum for the printing office, and allow him to pay it off in instalments, and have the yearly tribute cease. He loved freedom, he said, and could not bear dependence on any man, though he were the best man living. Franklin informs his sister that for a long time he took no

notice of his nephew's letter, which chafed him the more, till he resolved to abandon the island. A third very resolute letter was answered. Franklin inquired where his nephew thought of going, and mentioned the sum for which the property might be sold; if the person who had applied for it would not give that amount, everything was to be packed up and sent home. He added at the close, that "the things" had all arrived, and that he hoped Benny would do better somewhere else, though he feared it would be years before he was cured of his fickleness.

The following December Franklin wrote again :

"You will receive this by the hand of your son Benjamin, on whose safe return from the West Indies I sincerely congratulate you.

"He has settled accounts with me, and paid the balance honorably. He has also cleared the old printing-house to himself, and sent it to Boston, where he proposes to set up his business, together with bookselling, which, considering his industry and frugality, I make no doubt will answer. He has good credit and some money in England, and I have helped him by lending him a little more; so that he may expect a cargo of books, and a quantity of new letter, in the spring: and I shall, from time to time, furnish him with paper. We all join in love to you and yours.

"I am,

"YOUR LOVING BROTHER."

This was the "Benny" who, when some years before, apprenticed by Franklin to Mr. Parker, at New York, complained to his mother that his master did not furnish him with good

enough clothes. Franklin hearing of the complaint, wrote to his sister about it.

"I never knew an apprentice contented with the clothes allowed him by his master, let them be what they would. Jemmy Franklin, [this was his brother James' son,] when he was with me, was always dissatisfied and grumbling. When I was last in Boston, his aunt, [i. e. Mrs. Franklin], bid him go to a shop and please himself, which the gentleman did, and bought a suit of clothes on my account, dearer by one-half than any I ever afforded myself, one suit excepted; which I don't mention by way of complaint of Jemmy, for he and I are good friends, but only to show you the nature of boys."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*Governor Denny. — Entertainment in his Honor. — Presents the Gold Medal to Franklin. — Interview with Franklin. — Franklin's Independence. — New Disputes. — Conference with the Indians. — At Easton. — Letter to his Wife. — Broom-corn. — The Proprietary still Obstinate. — Franklin Appointed Agent to Petition the Crown Against Him. — Arrival of Lord Loudoun. — He Meets the Governor and Franklin. — Resolution in the Assembly. — Suspension of Rights. — Prepares to go to England. — Goes to New York. — Letter to his Wife. — Long Delay. — Letter to his Sister. — Care of the Aged. — Another Letter. — Benny Thinks of Marriage. — Miss Betsey. — Letter to his Wife. — To his Sister. — Peter Mecom. — Honesty in Business. — Letter to his Wife. — A Large Fleet. — Chased by Hostile Ships. — The Scilly Rocks. — Great Peril. — Off Falmouth. — Letter to his Wife. — In London.*

IN the year 1756, Gov. Morris was superseded by Capt. William Denny. The people of the province were glad of a change, hoping, though without sufficient grounds, that he would be more favorable to their interests. Accordingly,

when the proprietary mayor and corporation of Philadelphia made an entertainment in his honor, the members of the Assembly, sharing the general feeling, accepted an invitation to be present. Franklin was one of the company, willing, with others, to give a respectful welcome to the new ruler. He, on his part, knowing Franklin's high standing and powerful influence, was glad of so good an opportunity of paying his respects to the man whom the world honored, and who had it greatly in his power to aid or obstruct his administration. He had brought over with him the gold medal, voted by the Royal Society, and at the dinner, presented it to Franklin, accompanied with "many polite expressions of esteem." And after dinner, when the company were enjoying their wine, he took Franklin aside, and told him that he had been advised by friends in England to cultivate a friendship with him, as one capable of giving him the best advice. He wished, therefore, to be on the most cordial terms with him, and assured him of his readiness to do him any service in his power. The proprietor, he said, wished well to the province, and it would certainly be for the advantage of all parties, if there could be harmony between him and the people. He should look to Franklin as his main reliance in bringing about a good feeling; and he might depend on adequate rewards. Some wine having been sent to the governor, of which he made liberal use, he became more and more profuse in his compliments, solicitations, and promises.

Franklin was not to be entrapped by such flattery. He thanked the governor for his kind words. He replied courteously, but assured him that he had no favors to ask of the proprietor, and that, as a member of the Assembly, he could not accept of any; but that he would be ever ready to forward any measures proposed by the proprietor, which seemed to be for the public good. He hoped that the governor was not to be hampered by such unfortunate instructions as his predecessors had been.

The governor made no reply to this, as he could not well do. The disputes with the Assembly were soon renewed, and Franklin, true to his word, was as active as ever in the opposition. Socially, however, he and the governor were on friendly terms. Denny was a man of letters, had seen much of the world, and was entertaining in conversation. From him Franklin learned that Ralph was in high repute in England as a political writer, and was enjoying a pension of three hundred pounds a year.

A few months after Denny came into power, a conference was appointed with the Indians, who, instigated by the French, had given much trouble to the province. The conference consisted of the governor and members of the Council, and several members of the Assembly. They met at Easton on the 8th of November, 1756. The Indians, through Teedyuscung, king of the Delawares, made grievous complaints, to which the governor replied. No very satisfac-



tory result was reached, the chief proposing another council in the spring.

While at Easton, Franklin, ever mindful of home, wrote to his wife in a strain of feigned displeasure :

“MY DEAR CHILD :

“I wrote to you a few days since by a special messenger, and enclosed letters for all our wives and sweethearts, expecting to hear from you by his return, and to have the northern newspapers and English letters per the packet; but he is just now returned without a scrap for poor us. So I had a good mind not to write to you by this opportunity; but I never can be ill-natured enough even where there is the most occasion. The messenger says he left the letters at your house, and saw you afterwards at Mr. Duche’s, and told you when he would go, and that he lodged at Honey’s, next door to you, and yet you did not write; so let Goody Smith give one more just judgment, and say what should be done to you. I think I won’t tell you that we are well, nor that we expect to return about the middle of the week, nor will I send you a word of news; that’s poz.

“My duty to mother, love to the children, and to Miss Betsy and Gracy, etc., etc.

“I am, your *loving* husband,

“B. FRANKLIN.

“P. S. —*I have scratched out the loving words, being writ in haste by mistake, when I forgot I was angry.*”

A few months after this, in a short letter to his sister Jane, under date of February 21st, he communicates what has become an interesting piece of information, his helping to bring into notice the broom-corn, from which has since grown a large branch of manufacture :

"I enclose you some whisk seed; it is a kind of corn, good for creatures; it must be planted in hills, like Indian corn. The tops make the best thatch in the world; and of the same are made, the whisks you use for velvet. Pray try if it will grow with you. I brought it from Virginia. Give some to Mr. Cooper, some to Mr. Bowdoin."

To return to the political affairs of the province.

The proprietary continued obstinate, and the Assembly resolved to petition the king against him and his subordinates. Franklin was chosen their agent to go to England and present and support their petition, which might claim the greater consideration as it showed the proprietor to be regardless not only of the interests of the people, but of the crown. A bill for granting six thousand pounds to the king's use had been rejected by the governor, according to instructions from his superior.

Franklin accepted the commission, and had made his arrangements to sail, when Lord Loudoun, who was then in command of the royal troops at New York, arrived at Philadelphia, for the purpose of effecting an accommodation between the contending parties. He met the Governor and Franklin. The latter pleaded the cause of the Assembly, showing the injustice of the proprietary administration; the former pleaded his instructions, which he was sworn to obey, and which he could not disregard without ruin. If his lordship, however, would advise his breaking his agreement, he was not unwill-

ing to hazard the result. Franklin tried to prevail upon Lord Loudoun to do so, but in vain; for at last he was himself urged to persuade the Assembly to submission. His lordship further said that the province must go unprotected, unless it would provide for its own defence; he had no troops to spare.

Franklin acquainted the House with what had passed, and then presented a series of resolutions, declaring that the rights of the Assembly were not relinquished, but only suspended on the present occasion, through compulsion, against which they protested. On this ground a new bill was passed, conformable to the proprietary's wishes, which was signed by the Governor.

The controversy was, of course, not ended. There was the same necessity as before, that Franklin should proceed on his mission. The packet in which he had engaged a passage was gone, with his sea-stores, which loss was only recompensed by his lordship's thanks for his services, and he had to go to New York to find a ship. On his way, he wrote to his wife from Trenton :

**"MY DEAR CHILD:**

"About a dozen of our friends accompanied us quite hither, to see us out of the province, and we spent a very agreeable evening together. I leave home, and undertake this long voyage the more cheerfully, as I can rely on your prudence in the management of my affairs and education of our dear child; and yet I cannot forbear once more recom-

mending her to you with a father's tenderest concern. My love to all.

"I am, your affectionate husband,

"B. FRANKLIN."

He reached New York the day set by Lord Loudoun, who was already there, but the time of sailing was deferred from day to day for many weeks, while unwilling passengers were kept waiting for the great man's letters, which were always to be ready to-morrow.

While in New York, Franklin wrote some letters to friends in Philadelphia, which he put into the hands of a messenger who had arrived thence with despatches from Gov. Denny for the general, and expected to return at once. "I am to receive my answers to-morrow," said the messenger, "and then shall set out on my return immediately." A fortnight after, Franklin met the man in the same place; "So you are soon returned, Junis?" "Returned! no, I am not gone yet!" "How so?" "I have called here this and every morning these two weeks past for his lordship's letters, and they are not yet ready." "Is it possible, when he is so great a writer: for I see him constantly at his esri-toire?" "Yes," said Junis, "but he is like St. George, on the signs, *always on horseback, and never rides on.*"

This delay was very irksome to Franklin. He whiled away the time as best he could, sometimes in conferences with the general, sometimes in writing to his friends. There was a balance

due him on account of wagons and supplies for Braddock's army; he tried to effect a settlement; the general ordered a warrant drawn for payment, but before signing it, concluded to defer a settlement till they reached England, which was the end of it. Then, recruiting officers of the king's army had enlisted bound servants of the farmers, without compensation. Franklin sought redress; but the general could not be brought to a definite point.

Among the letters which he wrote at this time is one to his sister, Mrs. Mecom, under date of April 19, 1757.

"DEAR SISTER:

"I wrote a few lines to you yesterday, but omitted to answer yours, relating to sister Dowse. As *having their own way* is one of the greatest comforts of life to old people, I think their friends should endeavor to accommodate them in that, as well as anything else. When they have long lived in a house, it becomes natural to them; they are almost as closely connected with it, as the tortoise with his shell; they die if you tear them out of it; old folks and old trees, if you remove them, it is ten to one that you kill them; so let our good old sister be no more importuned on that head. We are growing old fast ourselves [Franklin was now fifty-one] and shall expect the same kind of indulgences; if we give them, we shall have a right to receive them in our turn.

"And as to her few fine things, I think she is in the right not to sell them, and for the reason she gives, that they will fetch but little; when that little is spent, they would be of no further use to her; but perhaps the expectation of possessing them at her death may make that person tender and careful of her, and helpful to her to the amount of ten

times their value. If so, they are put to the best use they possibly can be.

"I hope you visit sister as often as your affairs will permit, and afford her what assistance and comfort you can in her present situation. *Old age, infirmities, and poverty*, joined, are afflictions enough. The *neglect* and *slights* of friends and near relations should never be added. People in her circumstances are apt to suspect this sometimes without cause; *appearances*, therefore, should be attended to, in our conduct toward them, as well as *realities*. I write by this post to cousin Williams, to continue his care, which I doubt not he will do.

"We expect to sail in about a week, so that I can hardly hear from you again on this side the water; but let me have a line from you now and then, while I am in London. I expect to stay there at least a twelve-month. . . . My love to all, from, dear sister,

"Your affectionate brother,

"B. FRANKLIN.

"P. S.—*April 25th*. We are still here, and perhaps may be here a week longer. Once more adieu, my dear sister."

Certainly, many thanks are due to the provoking general for affording the opportunity to Franklin of writing this admirable letter.

About a month later he wrote again to his sister from Woodbridge, New Jersey, whither he seems to have escaped for a day or two to attend to some business. In it he referred to "Benny's" intentions of marriage. His wife seems to have been with him.

"I know nothing of that affair, but what you write me, except that I think Miss Betsey a very agreeable, sweet-tempered, good girl, who has had a housewifely education,

and will make, to a good husband, a very good wife. Your sister and I have a great esteem for her; and if she will be kind enough to accept of our nephew, we think it will be his own fault, if he is not as happy as the married state can make him. The family is a respectable one, but whether there can be any fortune I know not; and, as you do not inquire about this particular, I suppose you think with me that where everything else desirable is to be met with, that is not very material. If she does not *bring* a fortune, she will help to *make* one. Industry, frugality, and prudent economy in a wife, are to a tradesman, in their effects, a fortune, and a fortune sufficient for Benjamin, if his expectations are reasonable. We can only add, that, if the young lady and her friends are willing, we give our consent heartily, and our blessing. My love to brother and the children.

“Your affectionate brother,

“B. FRANKLIN.

“P. S.—If Benny will promise to be one of the tenderest husbands in the world, I will give my consent. He knows already what I think of Miss Betsey.

“I am his loving aunt,

“DEBORAH FRANKLIN.”

Still delayed; and about a week later, Franklin wrote to his wife, who had returned home:

“MY DEAR DEBBY:

“ . . . All the packets are to sail together with the fleet, but when that will be is yet uncertain; for yesterday came in three privateers with several prizes, and by them there is advice that the French fleet, which was in the West Indies, is come to the northward; and now it is questioned whether it will be thought prudent for these transports to sail till there is certain advice that the grand fleet is arrived from England. This, however, is only town talk. . . .

“I have been very low-spirited all day. This tedious

state of uncertainty and long waiting have almost worn out my patience. . . . I left my best spectacles on the table. Please send them to me."

On the 30th of May, he wrote again to Mrs. Mecom :

"DEAR SISTER:

"I have before me yours of the 9th and 16th instant. I am glad you have resolved to visit sister Dowse oftener ; it will be a great comfort to her, to find she is not neglected by you, and your example may perhaps be followed by some others of her relations."

A little further on, the writer gives some good advice, which many persons in our day would do well to lay to heart :

"I am glad that Peter Mecom\* is acquainted with the crown-soap business so as to make what is good of the kind. I hope he will always take care to make it faithfully, and never slight the manufacture, or attempt to deceive by appearances. Then he may boldly put his name and mark, and in a little time it will acquire as good a character as that made by his late uncle, or any other person whatever. I believe his aunt at Philadelphia [Mrs. Franklin] can help him to sell a good deal of it. . . . Let a box be sent to her (but not unless it be right good) and she will immediately return the ready money for it. . . . .

"I am glad to hear Johnny is so good and diligent a workman. If he ever sets up at the goldsmith's business, he must remember that there is one accomplishment without which he cannot possibly thrive in that trade, that is, *perfect honesty*. It is a business that, though ever so uprightly managed, is always liable to suspicion ; and if a man is once detected in the smallest fraud, it soon becomes pub-

\* Franklin's nephew.



lie, and every one is put upon his guard against him; no one will venture to try his wares, or trust him to make up his plate; so at once he is ruined. I hope my nephew will, therefore, establish a character as an *honest and faithful*, as well as *skilful* workman, and then he need not fear for employment."

The season has advanced into June, and still he is on shore. On the second day of the month Franklin wrote to his wife a final letter. Referring to his little daughter, he said:

"I hope my dear Sally will behave in everything to your satisfaction, and mind her learning and improvement. As my absence will make your house quieter, and lessen your business, you will have the more leisure to instruct her and form her. I pray God to bless you both, and that we may once more have a happy meeting. God preserve, guard and guide you. My duty to mother and love to all the family. I shall endeavor to write to you once more before we sail, being as ever, my dear child, your affectionate husband."

At last, the alarm about the French proving groundless, the general, being also presumed to have finished all his letters, gave orders to sail. There lays in the harbor a great fleet of nearly a hundred sail, designed for the reduction of Louisburg, and Lord Loudoun, with his army, embarked in the flag ship, accompanied by the three packet boats, destined for England, but which were to be at hand to receive his latest dispatches. It was several days after leaving New York before Franklin's packet was allowed to go on its way. The other two were taken to Halifax, with all their passengers; and when

the general, after spending some time there in "sham attacks on sham forts," as a preparation for taking Louisburg, decided to abandon the attack and return to New York, they were forced to go back with him.

The packet in which Franklin sailed proved at first to be a very dull sailor. It was found that she was too heavily loaded by the head, for, on shifting the water-casks further aft, she outstripped the rest of the fleet. After parting company with the fleet, the packet was chased by several hostile ships, but outsailed everything, and in thirty days had soundings. The captain hoped, by making a good run in the night, to be off Falmouth harbor in the morning. The wind was fresh and fair, and, crowding all sail, he shaped his course, as he thought, so as to pass wide of the Scilly Rocks. But a strong current, which sometimes sets up St. George's Channel, and which caused the loss of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's squadron, in 1707, diverted the ship from its course, and came near making her a wreck.

"We had a watchman," says Franklin, "placed in the bow, to whom they often called, 'Look well out before there;' and he as often answered, 'Ay, ay,' but perhaps had his eyes shut, and was half asleep at the time, they sometimes answering, it is said, mechanically; for he did not see a light just before us, which had been hid by the studding sails from the man at the helm, and from the rest of the watch, but by an accidental yaw of the ship was discovered, and occasioned a great alarm, we being very near it; the light appearing to me as large as a cart-wheel. It was

midnight, and our captain fast asleep; but Captain Kennedy [of the Royal Navy, a passenger] jumping upon deck, and seeing the danger, ordered the ship to wear round, all sails standing; an operation dangerous to the masts, but it carried us clear, and we avoided shipwreck, for we were running fast on the rocks on which the light was erected.

"This deliverance impressed me strongly with the utility of light-houses, and made me resolve to encourage the building some of them in America, if I should live to return thither.

"In the morning it was found by the sounding, that we were near our port, but a thick fog hid the land from our sight. About nine o'clock the fog began to rise, and seemed to be lifted up from the water like the curtain of a theatre, discovering underneath the town of Falmouth, the vessels in the harbor, and the fields that surround it. This was a pleasing spectacle to those who had long been without any other prospect than the uniform view of a vacant ocean, and it gave us the more pleasure as we were now free from the anxieties which had arisen."

In a letter to his wife, he says that, on landing:

"The bell ringing for church, we went thither immediately, and, with hearts full of gratitude, returned sincere thanks to God for the mercies we had received. Were I a Roman Catholic, perhaps I should on this occasion vow to build a chapel to some saints; but as I am not, if I were to vow at all, it should be to build a light-house."

From Falmouth he proceeded, with his son, immediately to London, stopping a little by the way to view Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, and Lord Pembroke's house and gardens, with the

very curious antiquities at Wilton. They reached London, July 27th, making the journey of two hundred and fifty miles in a week or ten days, proceeding at the slow rate of traveling customary at that time.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*At Peter Collinson's.—Letter to His Wife.—At Mrs. Stevenson's.—Mary Stevenson.—Visits from Distinguished Persons.—Very Ill.—Letter to His Wife.—Another Letter.—Home-sick.—Another Letter.—London Coaches.—Inventory of Articles Sent Home.—His Agency.—Seeks an Interview with Thomas and Richard Penn.—Their Prejudices.—Visits Cambridge and Other Places.—Sends Presents to His Daughter and a Friend.—Family Portraits.—Women and Politics.—Sends for Pippins, Hams, and Cranberries.—Goody Smith.—At Cambridge.—Visits the House of His Ancestors.—Thomas Franklin.*

FRANKLIN is once more in London, not now a young printer, a stranger, seeking employment, but a man of wide celebrity, on an important mission to the government, his society courted by the wise and great. He was a youth of eighteen when he left America before; now he is a venerable gentleman of fifty-one.

He spent the first few days at the house of his excellent friend, Peter Collinson, a member of the Royal Society, with whom he had corresponded on scientific subjects. The day of his

arrival, he sent off a letter to his wife, his "dear child," like a good husband, as he was. He soon took up his abode at the house of Mrs. Margaret Stevenson, in Craven street, to whom he had been recommended by some Pennsylvania friends who had boarded there, and whom he found to be a most amiable lady. She had a daughter, Mary, then eighteen years of age, for whom he formed a strong attachment, which lasted through life. He helped her in her studies, and when she was at her aunt's, Mrs. Tickell, with whom she spent most of her time, he kept up a correspondence with her on literary and scientific subjects. This accomplished young lady was subsequently married to Dr. Hewson, a celebrated anatomist. At his death, four years after, she was left with three children, to whose education and the care of her mother, she faithfully devoted herself.

At this pleasant home, for such it was, Franklin was at once visited by many distinguished persons, and from others on the continent he received congratulatory letters. Among others, Mr. Strahan, the king's printer and a member of Parliament, cordially welcomed him to England; Governor Shirley, with whom he had been on confidential terms in America, frequently called upon him, and men of science especially were proud to make his acquaintance. All which was very agreeable. But of course he gave his chief attention to his mission. This business was, however, soon interrupted, and for about

two months, by a serious illness. When he became better, under the skilful care of Dr. Fothergill, he began a letter to his wife, which he was twelve days in completing. It is dated November, 22nd. After alluding to his sickness, and other matters, he said:

“Had I been well, I intended to have gone round among the shops, and bought some pretty things for you and my dear, good Sally (whose little hands you say cured your headache), to send by this ship, but I must now defer it to the next, having only got a crimson satin cloak for you, the newest fashion, and the black silk for Sally; but Billy [his son William] sends her a scarlet feather, muff, and tippet, and a box of fashionable linen for her dress. In the box is a thermometer for Mr. Taylor, and one for Mr. Schlatter; as also a watch for Mr. Schlatter. . . . .

On fair days, which are but few, I venture out about noon. The agreeable conversation I meet with among men of learning, and the notice taken of me by persons of distinction, are the principal things that soothe me for the present under this painful absence from my family and friends. Yet those would not keep me here another week, if I had not other inducements; duty to my country, and hopes of being able to do it service.

“Pray remember me kindly to all that love us, and to all that we love. It is endless to name names.

“I am, my dear child,

“Your loving husband.”

A few weeks later, he tells her that, at his time of life, “domestic comforts afford the most solid satisfaction,” and that his “uneasiness at being absent from his family, and longing desire to be with them, make him often sigh in the midst of cheerful company.”

The next month, February 19th, 1758, his health now much improved, he writes again to "my dear child."

"Your kind advice," he says, "about getting a chariot I had taken some time before; for I found that every time I walked out, I got fresh cold; and the hackney-coaches at this end of the town, where most people keep their own, are the worst in the whole city, dirty, broken, shabby things, unfit to go into when dressed clean, and such as one would be ashamed to get out of at any gentleman's door. As to burning wood, it would answer no end, unless one would furnish all one's neighbors and the whole city with the same. The whole town is one great smoky house, and every street a chimney, the air full of floating seacoal soot, and you never get a sweet breath of what is pure, without riding some miles far into the country. . . . ."

"I send you by Captain Budden a large case and a small box. In the large case is another small box containing some English China; viz., melons and leaves for a dessert of fruit and cream, or the like; a bowl remarkable for the neatness of the figures, made at Bow, near this city; some coffee cups of the same; a Worcester bowl, ordinary. To show the difference of workmanship, there is something from all the china works in England; and one old true china bason mended, of an odd color. The same box contains four silver salt ladles, newest, but ugliest, fashion; a little instrument to core apples; another to make little turnips out of great ones; six coarse diaper breakfast cloths; they are spread on the tea table, for nobody breakfasts here on the naked table, but on the cloth they set a teaboard with the cups. There is also a little basket, a present from Mrs. Stevenson to Sally, and a pair of garters for you, which were knit by the young lady, her daughter, who favored me with a pair of the same kind, the only ones I have been able to wear, as they need



not be bound tight, the ridges in them preventing their slipping.

"We send them therefore as a curiosity for the form, more than for the value. Goody Smith may, if she pleases, make such for me hereafter. My love to her.

"In the great case, besides the little box, is contained some carpeting for a best room floor. There is enough for one large or two small ones; it is to be sewed together, the edges being felled down, and care taken to make the figures meet exactly; there is bordering for the same. This was my fancy. Also two large fine Flanders bedticks, and two pair of superfine blankets, two fine damask table-cloths and napkins, and forty-three ells of Ghentish Sheeting Holland. These you ordered. There are also fifty-six yards of cotton, printed curiously from copper plates, a new invention, to make bed and window curtains; and seven yards of chair bottoms, printed in the same way, very neat. These were my fancy; but Mrs. Stevenson tells me I did wrong not to buy both of the same color. Also seven yards of printed cotton, blue ground, to make you a gown. I bought it by candlelight, and liked it then, but not so well afterwards. If you do not fancy it, send it as a present from me to sister Jenny. There is a better gown for you, of flowered tissue, sixteen yards, of Mrs. Stevenson's fancy, cost nine guineas, and I think it a great beauty. There was no more of the sort, or you should have had enough for a negligée or suit.

"There are also snuffers, a snuff-stand, and extinguisher, of steel, which I send for the beauty of the work. The extinguisher is for spermaceti candles only, and is of a new contrivance, to preserve the snuff upon the candle. There is some music Billy bought for his sister, and some pamphlets for the Speaker [of the Assembly] and for Susy Wright. A mahogany and a little shagreen box, with microscopes and other optical instruments loose, are for Mr.

Alison, if he likes them; if not, put them in my room till I return. . . . There are also two sets of books, a present from me to Sally, *The World*, and *The Connoisseur*. My love to her.

"I forgot to mention another of my fancyings, viz: a pair of silk blankets, very fine. They are of a new kind, were just taken in a French prize, and such were never seen in England before. They are called blankets, but I think they will be very neat to cover a summer bed, instead of a quilt or counterpane. I had no choice, so you will excuse the soil on some of the folds; your neighbor Foster can get it off. I also forgot, among the China, to mention a large fine jug for beer, to stand in the cooler. I fell in love with it at first sight; for I thought it looked like a fat jolly dame, clean and tidy, with a neat blue and white calico gown on, good-natured and lovely, and puts me in mind of — somebody. It has the coffee cups in it, packed in best crystal salt, of a peculiar nice flavor, for the table, not to be powdered.

"I hope Sally applies herself to her French and music, and that I shall find she has made great proficiency. The harpsichord I was about to get, and which was to have cost me forty guineas, Mr. Stanley advises me not to buy; and we are looking out for another. . . . Sally's last letter to her brother is the best wrote that of late I have seen of her. I only wish she was a little more careful of her spelling. I hope she continues to love going to church, and would have her read over and over again the "Whole Duty of Man," and the "Lady's Library."

"Look at the figures on the china bowl and coffee cups, with your spectacles on; they will bear examining.

"I have made your compliments to Mrs. Stevenson. She is indeed very obliging, takes great care of my health, and is very diligent when I am any way indisposed; but yet I have a thousand times wished you with me, and my little

Sally with her ready hands and feet to do, and go, and come, and get what I wanted. There is great difference in sickness between being nursed with that tender attention which proceeds from sincere love, and — ”

The rest is lost.

It is pleasant to think of our world-renowned philosopher, commissioner to his Majesty, out “shopping” with his landlady, merrily discussing with that estimable person, the merits and prices of articles destined for his “dear child” in America. The above formidable inventory makes us fear that the good man, now that he has plenty of money to spend, has quite forgotten his homilies on luxury. That “China bowl, with a spoon of silver,” his wife’s surprise to him twenty-seven year before, which was “the first appearance of plate and China” in his house, suggests a curious contrast between the meagre outfit of that time and his present free and easy style of expenditure. But, unlike too many young housekeepers of our day, Franklin was willing to begin in an humble way and keep within his income, until ample means enabled him honestly to indulge his taste for a freer style of living. He did not buy luxuries which he could not pay for.

But Franklin was all this while busy with the objects of his agency. According to his instructions from the Assembly, first he sought an interview with the proprietaries, Thomas and Richard Penn, sons of William Penn, and laid before them the complaints which had brought

him to England. But these gentlemen, seeming to care little for the interests of the people of the province, insisted that the grievances were on their side. The Assembly had encroached on their prerogatives. The proprietaries also prejudiced the officers of the crown against his cause, by representing the Pennsylvanians as disposed to enlarge their own liberties even at the expense of the crown, and as backward in measures of military defense. While the savages were ravaging the country, the Assembly wasted its time in quarrelling with the governor and in thwarting his plans. Franklin prepared a careful refutation of these charges, which was published in his son's name, but it was not allowed a place in the very paper which had circulated them, without pay. The letter was not answered ; discussion was not what the proprietaries wanted.

The affair dragged along for more than a year, during which time Franklin visited various places of interest — Cambridge, among others, where he was “very kindly entertained in the colleges.”

After his return from this trip, he wrote to his wife, that he had sent to Philadelphia, as a present to a friend, Mrs. Moore, “some of the best writing paper for letters, and best quills and wax,” and also, “for my dear girl a newest fashioned white hat and cloak, and sundry little things ;” and he informed her that by a later packet would come for her little ladyship

“a pair of buckles, made of French paste stones, which are next in lustre to diamonds. They cost three guineas, and are said to be cheap at that price.” He adds:

“I fancy I see more likeness in her picture than I did at first, and I look at it often with pleasure, as at least it reminds me of her. Yours is at the painter’s, who is to copy it and do me of the same size; but as to family pieces, it is said they never look well, and are quite out of fashion, and I find the limner very unwilling to undertake anything of the kind. However, when Franky’s comes, and that of Sally by young Hesselius, I shall see what can be done.”

He then tells her that she was “very prudent not to engage in party disputes.”

“Women never should meddle with them, except in endeavors to reconcile their husbands, brothers, and friends, who happen to be of contrary sides. If your sex keep cool, you may be the means of cooling ours the sooner.”

He adds:

“I have no prospect of returning till next spring. But pray remember to make me as happy as you can, by sending some pippins for myself and friends, some of your small hams, and some cranberries. . . .

“Billy is of the Middle Temple, and will be called to the bar either this term or the next. . . I have ordered two large print Common Prayer Books to be bound, on purpose for you and Goody Smith; and, that the largeness of the print may not make them too bulky, the christenings, matrimonies, and everything else that you and she have not immediate and constant occasion for, are to be omitted. . .

“I could not find the bit of thread you mention to have sent me, of your own spinning. Perhaps it was too fine to

be seen. . . . I think of going into the country soon, and shall be pretty much out this summer, in different parts of England. I depend chiefly on these journeys for the establishment of my health."

Soon after, we find him again at Cambridge, at the Commencement. Writing to his wife, he says, "We were present at all the ceremonies, dined every day in their halls, and my vanity was not a little gratified by the particular regard shown me by the chancellor and vice-chancellor of the University, and the heads of colleges."

After the Commencement, he visited the home of his ancestors, and gleaned what information he could about them, from old people, the parish registers, and the tombstones. At Wellingborough he found still living Mary Fisher, the only child of his father's eldest brother. She and her husband were both aged, but in easy circumstances.

At Ecton, three or four miles from Wellingborough, he visited the old house and grounds where had lived several generations of Franklins. The place had been sold, but the house, "a decayed old stone building," was standing, being used for a school-house, and still known as the Franklin House.

The rector, on whom he called, showed him the parish memorials of his ancestors reaching back two hundred years. His wife, "a chatty old lady," took him into the graveyard, and pointed out several of the family grave-stones, now covered with moss. The names were

brought to light by means of a hard brush and a basin of water provided by the old lady, and used by Peter and Billy. She told them entertaining stories of Thomas Franklin, the father of Mrs. Fisher, and they had the pleasure of hearing the chimes in the steeple, placed there by a subscription which he had set on foot. He was a man whose advice was sought for "on all occasions, by all sorts of people." "He found out an easy method of saving their village meadows from being drowned" (by the river). When his plan was first proposed, nobody could "see how it could be;" "but, however," they said, "if Franklin says he knows how to do it, it will be done." How very like what was afterwards said in Philadelphia of our Franklin, "Have you consulted Franklin on this business? And what does he think of it?"

At Birmingham he discovered other relative, and some of his wife's; among others, "a daughter of his father's only sister, very old, and never married; a good, clever woman, but poor, though vastly contented with her situation, and very cheerful."

## CHAPTER XXV.

*The Study of Electricity.—Experiments.—Music.—The Armonica.—Excursion to Scotland.—University of Aberdeen.—Men of Note.—Lord Kames.—Parable on Persecution.—Letter to Lord Kames.—History of Pennsylvania.—A Settlement.—Canada.—Letter to Lord Kames.—The Future of America.—Letter to David Hume.—New Words.—American “Audience” for English Authors.—The Poet Daniel.—His Prophecy of America.—Charles Sumner.—John Adams.—Visits the North of England and Wales.—Scientific Correspondence with Miss Stevenson.—Letter to his Wife.—Visits the Continent.—Letter from Hume.—Franklin’s Reply.—Returns to America.*

WE are now brought to the year 1759. Much of Franklin’s time was now devoted to his favorite pursuit, the study of electricity. He had electrical instruments at his boarding-house, and in the forenoon generally had company to witness his experiments, any one that knew him being allowed to bring his friends. He also maintained a large correspondence with scientific friends in England and on the continent. If he must be hindered in his mission, he could find



no more agreeable way of passing his time, though doubtless, the interest attached to his experiments, which had the charm of novelty, as well as his urbanity, and his respectful treatment of his opponents, materially furthered the object of his mission.

He was very fond of music, and invented an instrument, which he called the *Armonica*, which attracted a good deal of attention. He had seen, in London, an instrument consisting of musical glasses, upon which tunes were played by passing the fingers round the brims. Being charmed by the sweetness of its tones, he thought it worth his while to improve its construction, disposing the glasses in a more convenient form, so as to admit of a greater number of tones. He had glasses blown in the shape of a hemisphere, with an open socket in the middle, the glasses gradually diminishing in size, and all fixed on a spindle, fastened horizontally in a case, and turned by a wheel moved by the foot. "The advantages of this instrument," says Franklin, "are, that its tones are incomparably sweet beyond those of any other; that they may be swelled and softened at pleasure by stronger or weaker pressures of the fingers, and continued to any length; and that the instrument being once well tuned, never wants tuning again." This instrument became very popular. It was manufactured in London, and sold for forty guineas. Franklin's rooms were often visited by friends to listen to his "musical performances." A Miss

Davies, having learned to play it, visited the leading cities of the continent, exhibiting her skill before large audiences. The *Armonica* had the favor of being played by this lady, accompanying an ode sung by her sister, at the nuptials of the Duke of Parma and the Arch duchess of Austria. So our philosopher not only instructed but charmed Europe.

During the summer of this year he, with his son, made an excursion to Scotland, where, he says, "We spent six weeks of the densest happiness I have met with in any part of my life ; the agreeable and instructive society we found there in such plenty has left so pleasing an impression on my memory that, did not strong connections draw me elsewhere, I believe Scotland would be the country I should choose to spend the remainder of my days in."

The University of Aberdeen had, some months before his visit to Scotland, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, which honor was subsequently received from the Universities of Oxford and Edinburgh ; and while at the latter place the freedom of the city was presented to him, "as a mark of the affectionate respect," says the town record, "which the magistrates and council have for a gentleman whose amiable character, greatly distinguished for usefulness to the society which he belongs to, and love to all mankind, had long ago reached them across the Atlantic ocean." A few days later the same honor was paid him at Aberdeen.

In Scotland he became acquainted with Dr. Robertson, the historian, David Hume, Lord Kames, and other men of note. It was at the country mansion of the latter, where he spent several delightful days, that he read his celebrated Parable on Persecution. The apologue is of Persian origin, and a similar story is found in Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*, but to Franklin belongs the merit, says Sparks, of imitating the scripture style with peculiar felicity, and of adding the closing verses; which is all he claimed.

His scientific pursuits and enjoyments did not, however, interfere with the business of his agency. In 1758 and the early part of 1759, he was busy, in connection with his son, in the preparation of a work designed to remove existing prejudice against his province. It gave a full account of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania, including the controversies which had arisen between the several Governors and their respective Assemblies. The work was not written by Franklin, but under his direction, though a large portion of it consists of messages and reports, prepared by him as a member of the Assembly.

It was published anonymously, but was ascribed to Franklin, and brought upon him a great deal of abuse. But it had its silent influence, and helped to prepare the way for a more candid consideration of the grievances set forth by the province.

In June, the next year, 1760, after a delay of nearly three years, a settlement was reached, by which the proprietary estates were declared subject to taxation. This result, though it did not embrace all the points of complaint, was yet very gratifying to Franklin, and entirely satisfactory to the Assembly, being all that could be expected under the circumstances.

Franklin had proved himself a wise and skillful negotiator. Little did he then think that he was training for more difficult and important diplomacy, affecting not a province, but almost a continent, and resulting not in new colonial relations, but in the birth of a new nation.

He could not now return to America, however, having still other interests of the province to look after.

It is a remarkable fact, that Franklin, by means of conversation or correspondence with leading men, and especially of a tract he published about this time, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered*, was instrumental in making Canada a permanent province of England; "the first step," says Sparks, "in the train of events that led in a few years to the independence of the colonies."

The subjugation of the French, having freed the colonies from fear from that quarter, as well as taught them their own strength, allowed them to press more earnestly their complaints against the mother country, for her unjust interference with their commerce and manufactures; com-

plaints which soon ripened into resistance and independence.

In a letter to Lord Kames, speaking of the conquest of Canada, Franklin said, "I have long been of opinion that the foundations of the future grandness and stability of the British Empire lie in America; and though, like other foundations, they are low and little now, they are, nevertheless, broad and strong enough to support the greatest political structure that human wisdom ever yet erected. . . . But I refrain, for I see you begin to think my notions extravagant, and look upon them as the ravings of a mad prophet."

All which, however, has proved true, only there are two Englands instead of one.

In a letter to David Hume, speaking of the introduction of new words, as, he complains, "generally wrong," by tending to change the language, "yet, at the same time," he adds :

"I cannot but wish the usage of our tongue permitted making new words, when we want them, by composition of old ones, whose meanings are already well understood. The Germans allow of it, and it is a common practice with their writers. . . .

"But I hope with you, that we shall always, in America, make the best English of this Island, our standard; and I believe it will be so. I assure you, it often gives me great pleasure to reflect, how greatly the *audience* (if I may so term it) of a good English writer, will, in another century or two, be increased by the increase of English people in our colonies."

An anticipation fully realized within the first

century, for the best British works find often a much wider circle of readers in America than in England. The foresight of Franklin reminds us of the remarkable prophecy of Daniel, the poet-laureate of James I, more than a century and a half before :

“Who in time knows whither we may vent  
The treasures of our tongue ? To what strange shores  
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,  
T’ enrich unknowing nations with our stores ?  
What worlds, in the yet unformed Occident,  
May ’come refined with the accents that are ours ?”

Charles Sumner, in his *Prophetic Voices* concerning America, quotes the prophesy of John Adams, written in 1780 : —“ You must know that I have undertaken to prophecy that English will be the most respectable language in the world, and the most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before the close of this. American population will, in the next age, produce a greater number of persons who will speak English than any other language, and these persons will have more general acquaintance and conversation with all other nations, than any other people.” But Mr. Sumner does not inform us that Adams was anticipated nearly twenty years by Franklin, as Franklin was anticipated a hundred and fifty by Daniel.

As was his custom, while abroad, Franklin made another summer tour, this year, visiting the North of England and Wales, and on his return stopping at Bristol and Bath.

He kept up his correspondence with his scientific friends, making ingenious observations on a variety of subjects. His best correspondent in this line, was that remarkable young lady, the daughter of his London hostess. She proposed questions in natural science, which Franklin answered, if he could, and sometimes she proposed theories of her own. What themes for letters to a young lady: The Effect of Air on the Barometer, the Benefits Derived from the Study of Insects, the Bristol Waters, and the Tide in Rivers, Salt Water rendered fresh by Distillation, Method of Relieving Thirst by Seawater, Tendency of Rivers to the Sea, Effect of the Sun's Rays on Cloths of Different Colors!

From a letter to his wife, dated Utrecht, September 14th, 1761, we learn that he spent the summer of that year on the continent, where he visited Holland and Flanders.

The time had now come for his return to America. Some of his friends urged him to take up his abode in England. Mr. Hume wrote to him :

"I am very sorry that you intend soon to leave our hemisphere. America has sent us many good things: gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, indigo, &c., but you are the first philosopher, and indeed the first great man of letters for whom we are beholden to her. It is our own fault that we have not kept him; whence it appears, that we do not agree with Solomon, that wisdom is above gold; for we take care never to send back an ounce of the latter, which we once lay our fingers upon."

In his reply, Franklin said :

“Your compliments of gold and wisdom are very obliging to me, but a little injurious to your country. The various value of everything in every part of the world, arises, you know, from the various proportions of the quantity to the demand. We are told that gold and silver in Solomon’s time, were so plenty, as to be of no more value in his country, than the stones on the street. You have here at present just such a plenty of wisdom. Your people are, therefore, not to be censured for desiring no more among them, than they have; and, if I have *any*, I should certainly carry it where, from its scarcity, it may probably come to a better market.”

About the end of August, Franklin sailed from England, in company with ten sail of merchant-ships, under a convoy of a man-of-war, reaching home on the first of November, after an absence of nearly six years. He found his wife and daughter well; “the latter grown quite a woman, with many amiable accomplishments,” acquired during his absence. His friends received him with a hearty welcome, crowding his house for many days, to congratulate him on his return.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

*In the Assembly. — His Son chosen Governor of New Jersey. — His Son Marries. — Tour through the Northern Colonies as Postmaster. — Accompanied by his Daughter. — Outrages on Friendly Indians. — “A Narrative.” — Preparations to meet the Insurgents. — Loses his Seat in the Assembly. — Jealousy of Franklin’s Influence. — Requested by the Assembly to Return to England to urge a Petition for a Change of Government in the Provinces. — A Protest against his Appointment. — John Dickinson. — Franklin Replies to Charges. — Generous Action of the Merchants. — Sails for England. — Letter to his Daughter. — Good Advice. — Arrives in London. — At Mrs. Stevenson’s. — Letter from Cadwallader Evans. — Greetings from Pennsylvania.*

FRANKLIN at once resumed his place in the Assembly, to which he had been elected every year during his absence. Three thousand pounds were voted him for his services in England, with the thanks of the body. It may be observed that no salary had been voted him, and that he had lived in England at his own expense, and that when he returned he made no charge or demand.

The February following, his son, who had been appointed Governor of New Jersey, arrived with his new wife, "a very agreeable West India lady," whom he had married soon after his father left England, and with his "approbation." The father accompanied him to his government, where he met with "the kindest reception from the people of all ranks."

In the spring of 1763, Dr. Franklin set out on a tour through all the northern colonies, to inspect and regulate the post-offices in the several provinces. He travelled in a light carriage about sixteen hundred miles, and did not get home till the beginning of November. He was accompanied by his daughter, who rode nearly all the way from Philadelphia to Rhode Island on a saddle-horse, and was much pleased with her tour.

Soon after his return, the community was much excited and alarmed by the unprovoked massacre, under circumstances of the most atrocious cruelty, of several members of a small tribe of friendly Indians, at Conestogo. Fifty-seven white men, living in the back frontiers, formed a conspiracy against these innocent people, the whole tribe numbering but twenty persons, including women and children, and after a night's ride, suddenly appeared at break of day, armed with guns and hatchets, before the little cluster of huts. They found but three men, two women, and a boy at home, and these they murdered, scalping them, and mutilating their bodies. One

of the killed was the aged Shehaes, who had assisted at the second treaty held with his tribe by William Penn, in 1701, and had ever since been an affectionate friend to the English. He was cut to pieces in his bed.

Having accomplished this base deed, these dastardly outlaws went to their homes by different roads.

"The universal concern," says Franklin, in his Narrative, "of the neighboring white people, on hearing of this event, and the lamentations of the younger Indians, when they returned and saw the desolation, and the butchered, half-burnt bodies of their murdered parents, and other relations, cannot well be expressed."

The surviving Indians were at once taken under the protection of the magistrates of Lancaster, and when the shocking news reached Philadelphia, the governor issued a proclamation calling upon the magistrates to arrest the authors of the massacre. But these lawless wretches, defying the authorities, determined to kill the little remnant that was at Lancaster for safe keeping. About a fortnight after the first attack, fifty of them, armed as before, went to that town, and violently broke open the door of the work-house, where the Indians were residing.

"When the poor creatures saw they had no protection nigh, nor could possibly escape, they divided into their little families, the children clinging to the parents; they fell on their knees, protested their innocence, declared their love to the English, and that, in their whole lives, they had never done them injury; and in this posture they all received

the hatchet! Men, women, and little children were every one inhumanly murdered in cold blood!" \*

The perpetrators of this brutality then mounted their horses, and rode off homeward, huzzaing in triumph as if they had performed a deed of glory. So weak was the government, that not one of the murderers was apprehended. And, strange as it may appear, there was an ever-active party, among the more ignorant, who approved the conduct of the murderers as a necessary means of defence, or a justifiable retaliation. The better part of the community were alarmed. Not only humanity had been outraged, but social order imperilled. Franklin, whose wisdom and energy seem to have been relied on in every emergency, now spoke for law and order and humanity, in a vigorous Narrative of the late massacres in Lancaster County. Addressing the perpetrators of the massacre, he said :

"All good people everywhere detest your actions. You have imbrued your hands in innocent blood; how will you make them clean? The dying shrieks and groans of the murdered will often sound in your ears. Their spectres will sometimes attend you, and affright even your innocent children. Fly where you will, your consciences will go with you. Talking in your sleep shall betray you, in the delirium of a fever you yourselves shall make your own wickedness known."

Appealing to the inhabitants, he said :

"Let us rouse ourselves, for shame, and redeem the

\* Narrative.

honor of our province from the contempt of its neighbors; let all good men join heartily and unanimously in support of the laws, and in strengthening the hands of government; that justice may be done, the wicked punished, and the innocent protected; otherwise, we can, as a people, expect no blessing from Heaven; there will be no security for our persons or properties; anarchy and confusion will prevail over all, and violence without judgment dispose of everything."

This pamphlet did not, indeed, quell the rioters, for, backed by the populace, and by the timidity of the authorities, a great body of them with arms afterwards marched towards the capital, with an avowed resolution to put to death one hundred and forty Moravian Indians, who were then under the government's protection. But it effectually roused the people to follow Franklin in forming a military association; there being no militia. Nearly a thousand of the citizens took arms, and the governor made Franklin's house his headquarters for some time, and did everything by his advice; "so that," as he says, humorously, in a letter to Lord Kames, "for about forty-eight hours I was a very great man."

The insurgents, having come within six miles of Philadelphia, were checked in their purpose by the preparation which they found had been made to oppose them. Improving the favorable moment, the governor appointed Franklin and three other persons "to meet and discourse with them." Their reasonings prevailed to turn back the rioters and restore quiet to the city.

The governor, who had been glad enough to shelter his head beneath Franklin's roof in the time of danger, now that peace was restored, meanly availed himself of the unpopularity which Franklin's efficiency against the insurgents had provoked among the lowest class of the inhabitants, to get him turned out of the Assembly. The fact is, Franklin was proved to be too powerful. It was his influence, and not the governor's authority, that had saved the province from the horrors of anarchy and bloodshed. The governor succeeded in so prejudicing the voters that, in 1764, Franklin lost his seat by twenty-five votes out of four thousand. But it was a paltry triumph. Franklin had already been the principal means of defeating a militia bill, which the governor wished to force through the House, giving to him the sole appointment of officers, and having other objectionable features. And at an adjourned session, after Franklin had lost his seat, the House approved of the resolutions taken when he was Speaker, of petitioning the crown for a change of government, and requested him to return to England, to prosecute that petition.

This appointment sent dismay into the proprietary party. They had thought to silence Franklin, but they had only helped to make him a more influential foe to their pretensions. He must not be allowed to go to England. The effect of abuse was first tried, and when that only strengthened his cause, a protest was sent

to the Assembly. Even a man of so much merit as John Dickinson, personally, also, a friend to Franklin, and afterwards an able defender of colonial rights, was so far carried away for the time by party spirit, as to allow himself to say :

“The gentleman proposed has been called here to-day, ‘a great luminary of the learned world.’ Far be it from me to detract from the merit I admire. Let him still shine, but without wrapping his country in flames. Let him, from a private station, from a smaller sphere, diffuse, as I think he may, a beneficial light; but let him not be made to move and blaze like a comet, to terrify and distress.”

But remonstrances, speeches and protests could not reverse the appointment.

Just before starting, Franklin replied to the charges made against him, closing with these words :

“I am now to take leave, perhaps a last leave, of the country I love, and in which I have spent the greater part of my life. *Esto perpetua*. I wish every kind of prosperity to my friends; and I forgive my enemies.”

As the treasury was then empty, the merchants of the city, in two hours, subscribed eleven hundred pounds as a loan to the public, towards his expenses. On the 7th of November, 1764, he left home the third time for England, being accompanied sixteen miles to the ship by a cavalcade of three hundred of his friends, “who,” he says, “filled our sails with their good wishes.”

He sailed the next day, but the ship was detained over night at Reedy Island, in the Dela-

ware. In a letter to his daughter, written from that place, at night, he says :

"The affectionate leave taken of me by so many friends at Chester, was very endearing. God bless them, and all Pennsylvania.

"My dear child," he adds, "the natural prudence and goodness of heart God has blest you with, make it less necessary for me to be particular in giving you advice. I shall therefore only say, that the more attentively dutiful and tender you are towards your good mamma, the more you will recommend yourself to me. But why should I mention *me*, when you have so much higher a promise in the commandments, that such conduct will recommend you to the favor of God. You know I have many enemies, all, indeed, on the public account (for I cannot recollect that I have in a private capacity given just cause of offence to any one whatever), yet they are enemies, and very bitter ones; and you must expect their enmity will extend in some degree to you, so that your slightest indiscretions will be magnified into crimes, in order the more sensibly to wound and afflict me. It is, therefore, the more necessary for you to be extremely circumspect in all your behavior, that no advantage may be given to their malevolence.

"Go constantly to church, whoever preaches. The act of devotion in the Common Prayer Book is your principal business there, and, if properly attended to, will do more towards amending the heart than sermons generally can do. For they were composed by men of much greater piety and wisdom than our common composers of sermons can pretend to be; and therefore, I wish you would never miss the prayer-days; yet I do not mean you should despise sermons, even of the preachers you dislike, for the discourse is often much better than the man, as sweet and clear waters come through very dirty earth. I am the more particular on this



head, as you seemed to express, a little before I came away, some inclination to leave our church, which I would not have you do.

“For the rest, I would only recommend to you, in my absence, to acquire those useful accomplishments, arithmetic and bookkeeping. This you might do with ease, if you would resolve not to see company on the hour you set apart for those studies. . . .

“I pray that God’s blessing may attend you, which is worth more than a thousand of mine, though they are never wanting. Give my love to your brother and sister,\* as I cannot write to them, and remember me affectionately to the young ladies, your friends, and to our good neighbors.

“I am, my dear child,

“YOUR AFFECTIONATE FATHER.”

After a stormy passage of thirty days, he landed at Portsmouth, whence he proceeded at once to London, and took possession of his old quarters at Craven Street.

We learn from a letter to Franklin from Cadwallader Evans, that the news of his arrival,—

“Occasioned a great and general joy in Pennsylvania among those whose esteem an honest man would value most; the bells rang on that account till midnight, and libations were poured out for your health, and every other happiness. Even your old friend, Hugh Roberts, stayed with us till eleven o’clock, which, you know, was a little out of his common road, and gave us many curious anecdotes within the compass of your forty years’ acquaintance.”

\* William and his wife.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

*Offensive Acts of the British Ministry.—The Loyalty of the Colonists.—Led by a Thread.—Proposed Taxation.—“No Taxation without Representation.”—Franklin Remonstrates with the British Minister.—The Stamp Act.—Earl of Chatham.—Restrictions on American Manufactures.—Letter to Lord Kames.—Scotch Music.—Mr. Tytler.—Letter to his Wife.—English Roads.—Letter to his Wife.—Letter from his Wife.—Letter from his Daughter—The Stamp Act.*

THE direct object of Dr. Franklin's present agency in England, a change of government in Pennsylvania, was soon thrown into the shade by acts of the British ministry that profoundly affected not one but all the colonies, and claimed his almost exclusive attention. A wider sphere was opening before him, demanding the highest statesmanship, and in which all his great qualities were to be brought into exercise, and put to the severest test. He had startled the world by his scientific discoveries ; he was to win its further admiration by his political sagacity.

The colonists were loyal to the crown ; they “considered themselves as a part of the British

Empire, and as having one common interest with it." They were ready to vote money for the king's service, and to devote life as well as treasure to enlarge and strengthen the British Empire. By lineage, by religion, by letters, by grand traditions, they were one with England. They were governed "at the expense," to England, "only of a little pen, ink and paper; they were led by a thread. They had not only a respect, but an affection for Great Britain; for its laws, its customs and manners, and even a fondness for its fashions." It was for the interest of England to cherish this affection. But the mother country became jealous of the growing prosperity of her trans-Atlantic offspring. And when the peace of Paris, in 1763, which ended the French war, left a vast debt upon her, she seized the occasion to impose a tax upon the colonies, by an act of Parliament, as a means of lightening her own burden. If the British ministry had asked the colonies to share the load, they would doubtless have generously responded, as they had often done before, but when compulsion was resorted to, they became indignant. Rumors of the threatened measure had reached America before Dr. Franklin's departure, and he had been instructed by the Assembly to prevent its passage. This was the feeling in all the colonies — "No taxation without representation." They would not be taxed by a body in which they had no voice.

Soon after his arrival in England, Franklin

called upon the British ministry, and presented the remonstrance of the Pennsylvania Assembly. He showed the mischievous tendency of the proposed tax, and did all in his power to oppose it. But early in the year 1765, the fatal Stamp Act was passed by Parliament. It was a tax in the shape of a government stamp upon papers required in judicial proceedings, bills of lading, college diplomas, and custom-house clearances. How the news was received in America, the world knows. In England, too, there was a powerful opposition, which led to a change of ministry in the summer of the same year. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, the great orator and statesman, and other distinguished men in and out of Parliament, denounced the measure.

There existed at this time in England a great jealousy of American manufactures. America, it was said, must not make so much as a horse-shoe. She must buy everything of England. To expose these absurd and mischievous fears Franklin prepared a humorous article for a London newspaper.

But however much he was interested in the affairs of the colonies, he liked to turn his mind to other themes. The next month after writing the above, he penned a letter to Lord Kames, in which he made some very ingenious observations on Scotch music. He expressed the opinion that

“The reason why the Scotch tunes have lived so long, and will probably live forever (if they escape being stifled in

modern affected ornament), is merely this, that they are really compositions of melody and harmony united, or that their melody is harmony. I mean the simple tunes sung by a single voice. As this will appear paradoxical, I must explain my meaning. In common acceptation, indeed, only an agreeable *succession* of sounds is called *melody*, and only the *co-existence* of agreeable sounds, *harmony*. But, since the memory is capable of retaining for some moments a perfect idea of the pitch of a past sound, so as to compare with it the pitch of a succeeding sound, and judge truly of their agreement or disagreement, there may and does arise from thence a sense of harmony between the present and past sounds, equally pleasing with that between two present sounds.

“Now the construction of the old Scotch tunes is this, that almost every succeeding emphatical note is a third, a fifth, an octave, or in short some note that is in concord with the preceding note. Thirds are chiefly used, which are very pleasing concords. . . . .

“Further, when we consider by whom these ancient tunes were composed, and how they were first performed, we shall see that such harmonical successions of sounds were natural and even necessary in their construction. They were composed by the minstrels of those days to be played on the harp accompanied by the voice. The harp was strung with wire, which gives a sound of long continuance, and had no contrivance like that of the modern harpsichord, by which the sound of the preceding could be stopped, the moment a succeeding note began. To avoid actual discord, it was therefore necessary that the succeeding emphatic note should be a chord with the preceding, as their sounds must exist at the same time. Hence arose that beauty in those tunes that has so long pleased, and will please forever, though men scarce know why. They were originally com-

posed for the harp, and of the most simple kind, I mean a harp without any half notes but those in the natural scale, and with no more than two octaves of strings, from C to C, I conjecture from another circumstance, which is, that not one of those tunes, really ancient, has a single artificial half note in it, and that in tunes where it was most convenient for the voice to use the middle notes of the harp, and place the key in F, there the B, which if used should be a B flat, is always omitted, by passing over it with a third.

"The connoisseurs in music will say I have no taste; but I cannot help adding, that I believe our ancestors, in hearing a good song distinctly articulated, sung to one of those tunes and accompanied by the harp, felt more real pleasure than is communicated by the generality of modern operas, exclusive of that arising from the scenery and dancing."

"This notion of Dr. Franklin's," says Mr. Tytler, in his *Life of Lord Kames*, "respecting what may be called the Ideal Harmony of the Scottish melodies, is extremely acute, and is marked by that ingenious simplicity in the thought, which is characteristic of a truly philosophic mind."

About this time he wrote to his wife concerning some domestic affairs, under date June 4, 1765 :

"MY DEAR CHILD:

. . . . "I could have wished to be present at the finishing of the kitchen, as it is a mere machine; and, being new to you, I think you will scarce know how to work it; the several contrivances to carry off steam, smell and smoke not being fully explained to you. The oven, I suppose, was put up by the written directions in my former letter. You mention nothing of the furnace. If that iron one is not set, let it alone till my return, when I shall bring a more convenient copper one.

"You wonder how I did to travel seventy-two miles in a short winter day, on my landing in England, and think I must have practiced flying. But the roads here are so good, with post-chaises and fresh horses every ten or twelve miles, that it is no difficult matter. A lady that I know, has come from Edinburgh to London, being four hundred miles, in three days and a half. . . .

"I cannot but complain in my mind of Mr. Smith, that the house is so long unfit for you to get into, the fences not put up, nor the other necessary articles ready. The well I suspected would have been dug in the winter, or early in the spring, but I hear nothing of it. You should have gardened long before the date of your last, but it seems the rubbish was not removed. I am much obliged to my good old friends, that did the honor to remember me in the unfinished kitchen. I hope soon to drink with them in the parlor.

"I am very thankful to the good ladies you mention, for their friendly wishes. Present my best respects to Mrs. Grace, and dear, precious Mrs. Shewell, Mrs. Masters, Mrs. and Miss Galloway, Mrs. Redman, Mrs. Graeme, Mrs. Thomson, Mrs. Story, Mrs. Bartram, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Hilborne, and all the others you have named to me. . . .

"It rejoices me to learn that you are more free than you used to be from the headache, and that pain in your side. I am likewise in perfect health. God is very good to us both in many respects. Let us enjoy his favors with a thankful and cheerful heart; and, as we can make no direct return to him, show our sense of his goodness to us by continuing to do good to our fellow-creatures, without regarding the return they make us, whether good or bad. For they are all his children, though they may sometimes be our enemies. The friendships of this world are changeable, un-

certain, transitory things; but his favor, if we can secure it, is our inheritance forever.

"I am, my dear Debby,

"YOUR EVER LOVING HUSBAND."

Again in July he writes :

"I had the great pleasure of hearing from you and Sally last night by the packet. . . . Mrs. Stevenson bids me tell Sally, that the striped gown I have sent her will wash, but it must be with a light hand."

In November, a year after his leaving home, she wrote to him that she was "as happy as possible, while you are not here to make me quite so."

All the while that the kitchen, the garden, and the striped gown were under consideration, the proposed Stamp Act was agitating England and America. A letter to her father from Sally, dated Burlington, New Jersey, October 14th, reveals something of the public feeling in America, and also her own thoughts on some other subjects :

"The subject now is the Stamp Act, and nothing else is talked of; the Dutch talk of the stamp act, the negroes of the tamp,—in short, everybody has something to say."

But the Stamp Act was not all that the young lady had to write about :

"I am going," she adds, "to ask my papa for some things that I can't get here; but must beg, if I am troublesome, he would send . . . to me: 't is some gloves, both white and mourning, the last to be the largest. I have sent one that fits me best, but that must be a straw's breadth bigger in the arm, for I never had a pair in my life that fitted



me there. Some lavender from Smith, in Old Bond Street, and some tooth-powder from Green and Rutles, in Ludgate Street. Sister is to have some of the two latter. I have also a request to make you for Cousin Debby, to get a glass like the one enclosed in a box which Captain Friend will deliver to you. It belonged to somebody else, and she had the misfortune to break it. Mamma desired me to tell you that she . . . had shipped you some apples and cranberries. There is not a young lady of my acquaintance but what has desired to be remembered to you.

“I am, my dear,

“YOUR VERY DUTIFUL DAUGHTER.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Unpopularity of the Stamp Act. — Dr. Franklin's Influence. — Party Spirit in Pennsylvania. — How He bears Calumny. — Letter to His Sister. — His Examination before Parliament. — Questions and Answers. — His Bearing. — Whitfield's Testimony. — Letter from His Sister. — She wants "Some Fine Old Linen." — Sends Her a Box of Millinery. — Her Letter to Mrs. Franklin. — Letter to His Wife. — Repeal of the Stamp Act. — A New Gown. — Reels. — Cheeses. — Sir Thomas Pringle. — Excursion to the Continent. — On a Permanent Union between England and America, — Too Late. — Friar Bacon. — Returned to the Assembly. — Letter of His Daughter. — "The Old Ticket Forever."*

THE pressure was too great upon the government to allow the Stamp Act to remain upon the Statute Book. Its repeal was demanded. From America came a voice of loud indignation, which could not be disregarded, and in Parliament it was warmly denounced. In bringing about its repeal, Dr. Franklin bore a conspicuous part. By conversation, by correspondence, by articles in the newspapers, and especially, by his

answers in his remarkable examination before the House of Commons, he did more than any other man to enlighten the public mind, and expose the injustice and madness of the Act of Parliament. "I was extremely busy," he wrote, to Lord Kames, "attending members of both Houses, informing, explaining, consulting, disputing, in a continual hurry from morning till night."

And yet Mrs. Franklin wrote to him, September 22d, from Philadelphia, that Samuel Smith was "setting the people mad by telling them that it was you that had planned the Stamp Act, and that you are endeavoring to get the Test Act brought over here." Party spirit is the same always and everywhere.

Dr. Franklin took all this in a very philosophical spirit, as is shown in a letter to his sister :

"As to the reports you mention, that are spread to my disadvantage, I give myself as little concern about them as possible. I have often met with such treatment from people that I was all the while endeavoring to serve. At other times I have been extolled extravagantly, where I had little or no merit. These are the operations of nature. It sometimes is cloudy, it rains, it hails; again it is clear and pleasant, and the sun shines on us. Take one thing with another, and the world is a pretty good sort of a world, and it is our duty to make the best of it, and be thankful. One's true happiness depends more upon one's own judgment of one's self, or a consciousness of rectitude in action and intention, and the approbation of those few who judge impartially, than upon the applause of the unthinking, undiscerning multitude, who are apt to cry *Hosanna ! to-day, to-morrow, Crucify him !*"

By a vote of Parliament, Dr. Franklin was called before that body for examination, on the 13th of February, 1766. It was an occasion of intense interest to all parties, in the old world and the new. Franklin comprehended its importance, and acquitted himself nobly.

To the first question :

“What is your name, and place of abode?”

He answered :

“Franklin, of Philadelphia.”

When asked :

“Don’t you think they (the Americans) would submit to the Stamp Act, if it was modified, the obnoxious parts stricken out, and the duty reduced to some particulars of small moment?”

He replied :

“No, they will never submit to it.”

And to the question :

“What is your opinion of a future tax, imposed on the same principle with that of the Stamp Act? How would the Americans receive it?”

He answered :

“Just as they do this. They would not pay it.”

In the course of the examination, referring to a duty which might be laid on the necessaries of life, Franklin said he did not know a single article imported into the northern colonies, which they could not “do without or make themselves.”

“I am of opinion, that before their old clothes are worn

out, they will have new ones of their own making. The people will all spin, and work for themselves in their own houses."

To the question :

"Can anything less than a military force carry the Stamp Act into execution?"

He answered :

"I do not see how a military force can be applied to that purpose."

"Why may it not?"

"Suppose a military force sent to America, they will find nobody in arms; what are they then to do? They cannot force a man to take stamps, who chooses to do without them. They will not find a rebellion; they may, indeed, make one."

"If the Stamp Act should be repealed, would it induce the Assemblies of America to acknowledge the right of Parliament to tax them, and would they erase their resolutions?"

"No, never."

"Are there no means of obliging them to erase their resolutions?"

"None that I know of; they will never do it, unless compelled by force of arms."

"Is there a power on earth that can force them to erase them?"

"No power, how great soever, can force men to change their opinions."

To the question :

"What used to be the pride of the Americans?"

The answer was given :

"To indulge in the fashions and manufactures of Great Britain."

And to the next and final one :

“What is now their pride?”

He responded like a true patriot :

“To wear their old clothes over again, till they can make new ones.”

Having spoken thus wisely and bravely, he withdrew. All who heard him bore witness to the manliness of his bearing, and his complete mastery of the subject.

“Our worthy friend, Dr. Franklin,” wrote George Whitfield, “has gained immortal honor by his behavior at the bar of the House. The answer was always found equal if not superior to the questioner. He stood unappalled, gave pleasure to his friends, and did honor to his country.”

“The dignity of his bearing,” says Sparks, “his self-possession, the promptness and propriety with which he replied to each interrogatory, the profound knowledge he displayed upon every topic presented to him, his perfect acquaintance with the political condition and internal affairs of his country, the fearlessness with which he defended the late doings of his countrymen, and censured the measures of parliament, his pointed expressions and characteristic manner; all these combined to rivet the attention, and excite the astonishment of his audience. And, indeed, there is no event in this great man’s life, more creditable to his talents and character, or more honorable to his fame, than this examination before the British Parliament. It is an enduring monument of his wisdom, firmness, sagacity, and patriotism.”

From that day, “that mother of mischiefs,” as he termed the Stamp Act, was doomed; and it was soon repealed.

A fortnight after his examination, he wrote to his wife to "congratulate" her on the "expected" repeal of the Act, and on the "great share of health" they both enjoyed. He told her of Mr. Whitfield calling on him; and that he had sent "some curious beans for her garden."

From his sister, Mrs. Mecom, he received a letter of congratulation. Referring to his health, she said :

"I hope in God you have recovered it, and will live long to make your enemies ashamed. Your answers to the Parliament are thought by the best judges to exceed all that has been wrote on the subject."

This was the judgment of Boston. Then coming down from the great theme, she talked of matters which more nearly concerned herself, but which she knew her good brother would be glad to attend to :

"I have a small request to ask, though it is too trifling a thing for you to take care of. . . . It is to procure me some fine old linen or cambric (as a very old shirt or cambric handkerchiefs), dyed into bright colors, such as red and green, a little blue, but chiefly red; for, with all my own art, and good old Uncle Benjamin's memorandums, I can't make them good colors; and my daughter Jenny, with a little of my assistance, has taken to making flowers for the ladies, heads and bosoms with pretty good acceptance, and if I can procure those colors, I am in hopes we shall get something by it worth our pains if we live till spring."

An indorsement on the letter, "Sent a box of millinery," makes it sure that the affairs of Parliament or Assembly did not prevent the kind

brother from making up a package for Boston. The sister well knew that he was not above such brotherly kindness, as she had often received substantial favors from him, to help the family over a hard place. At the beginning of the year, nine months before, she wrote to Mrs Franklin, from Boston :

“ We are now supplied not only with necessary but creditable clothing, for brother has sent each of us a printed cotton gown, a quilted coat, a bonnet, each of the girls a cap, and some ribbons. Mine is very suitable for me to wear now, being black, and a purple cotton; but the girls’ are light colored.”

Such kindly acts are more honorable to Franklin than all his achievements in science and diplomacy.

On the 27th he had the pleasure of writing to his wife, his “ dear child ” :

“ As the Stamp Act is at length repealed, I am willing you should have a new gown, which you may suppose I did not send sooner, as I knew you would not like to be finer than your neighbors, unless in a gown of your own spinning. Had the trade between the two countries totally ceased, it was a comfort to me to recollect that I had once been clothed from head to foot in woollen and linen of my wife’s manufacture, that I never was prouder of any dress in my life, and that she and her daughter might do it again if it was necessary. I told the Parliament that it was my opinion, before the old clothes of the Americans were worn out, they might have new ones of their own making. I have sent you a fine piece of Pompadour sarsin, fourteen yards, cost eleven shillings a yard; a silk negligée and petticoat of brocaded lutestring for my dear Sally, with two dozen gloves, four



bottles of lavender water, and two little reels. The reels are to screw on the edge of the table, when she would wind silk or thread. The skein is to be put over them, and winds better than if held in two hands. There is also a gimcrack corkscrew, which you must get some other gimcrack to show you the use of. In the chest is a parcel of books for my friend Mr. Coleman, and the other for Cousin Colbert. . . . I send you also a box with three fine cheeses. Perhaps a bit of them may be left when I come home. Mrs. Stevenson has been very diligent and serviceable in getting these things together for you, and presents her best respects, as does her daughter, to both you and Sally. . . .

“There are some droll prints in the box, which were given me by the printer, and, being sent when I was not at home, were packed up without my knowledge. I think he was wrong to put in Lord Bute, who had nothing to do with the Stamp Act.”

In the summer of 1766, in company with Sir Thomas Pringle, the Queen's physician, he spent eight weeks on the continent, for the benefit of his health, visiting Pyrmont, Gottingen, Hanover, and some of the leading universities.

The subject of effecting a permanent union between England and America, by allowing to the latter a representation in parliament, was much discussed at this time. Franklin, in a letter to a friend, said that in his private opinion this would be “the best for the whole.”

“But,” he added, “I think it will never be done.” It was too late. “The affair is now in the situation of Friar Bacon's project of making a brazen wall round England for its eternal security. His servant, Friar Bungey, slept while the brazen head, which was to dictate how it might be done,

said, *Time is* and *Time was*. He only waked to hear it say, *Time is past*. An explosion followed, that tumbled their house about the conjuror's ears."

In October of this year, Franklin was re-instated in his old place in the Assembly. His daughter Sally wrote from Philadelphia to her brother the governor, October 31, 1766 :

"*' The old ticket forever ! We have it by thirty-four votes ! God bless our worthy and noble Agent, and all his family !'*" were the joyful words we were waked with at two or three o'clock this morning, by the White Oaks. They then gave us three hurras and a blessing, then marched off. How strong is the cause of truth ! We have beat three parties: the Proprietary, the Presbyterians, and the Half-and-Half."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

*George the Third.—Thackeray.—Letter to his Wife.—Necessity of Economy.—Mr. Bache.—His House.—Sarah Franklin.—Sir John Pringle.—Visits Paris.—Letter to Miss Stevenson.—Account of his Journey, and of his residence at Paris.—Ladies Toilet.—Painting the Cheeks.—The Queen.—Converses with the King.—The Royal Supper.—Versailles.—Paris.—French Politicians.—Treatment of Strangers.*

IN the year 1767, to which we are now brought, George the Third was in the seventh year of his reign. He wanted to be the father of his people, but to his narrow mind, this was to be done by strictly enforcing the royal authority. In his view, the Americans had grown to be altogether too wayward; they were putting on too many airs; and hence he naturally inclined to measures which he thought were likely to improve their manners, and make them more pliant subjects. He could see no reason why they should not be taxed whenever he and parliament so decided, and it has been supposed that the royal signature to the repeal of the Stamp Act was obtained only by passing a De-

claratory Act, as it was called, which affirmed "the right" of parliament "to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." He was a man of petty detail, with no breadth, and no foresight. He could tell, says Thackeray, "all the facings, and the exact number of the buttons, and all the tags and laces, and the cut of all the cocked hats, pigtails, and gaiters in his army; he knew the smallest particulars regarding the routine of ministers, secretaries, embassies, audiences. . . . Those parts of the royal business he was capable of learning, and he learned." But how to manage the great affairs of states, how to govern a free people, was utterly beyond his power. He would not consult the great men, like Pitt and Burke, but gave ready audience to those, who, either because they were of the same low standard as himself, or because they wanted to use his weakness for their own ends, flattered his little pride, and encouraged his mulish obstinacy.

If a truly great and wise man had then been on the throne, the difficulties between the two countries might have been amicably adjusted. As it was, there must be long delays of justice, and ungracious concessions doled out, in a spirit that only widened the breach between the unnatural mother and the suffering child.

The repeal of the one most offensive measure did not, therefore, relieve Franklin from the necessity of continuing his agency. He must remain yet longer, to watch the course of events,

to follow up any advantage gained, to dispel prejudices, to promote good feeling toward his country. But at present he could do little more than wait. In June he wrote to his wife :

“ It seems as if I should stay here another winter, and therefore I must leave it to your judgment to act in the affair of our daughter's match, as shall seem best. If you think it a suitable one, I suppose the sooner it is completed the better. In that case I would advise, that you do not make an expensive feasting wedding, but conduct everything with frugality and economy, which our circumstances now require to be observed in all our expenses. For, since my partnership with Mr. Hall is expired, a great source of our income is cut off; and, if I should lose the post-office, which, among the many changes here, is far from being unlikely, we should be reduced to our rents and interest of money for a subsistence, which will by no means afford the chargeable housekeeping and entertainments we have been used to.

“ For my own part, I live here as frugally as possible, not to be destitute of the comforts of life, making no dinners for anybody, and contenting myself with a simple dish when at home; and yet, such is the dearth of living here, in every article, that my expenses amaze me. I see too, by the sums you have received in my absence, that yours are very great; and I am very sensible that your situation naturally brings you a great many visitors, which occasions an expense not easily to be avoided, especially when one has been long in the practice and habit of it. But when people's incomes are lessened, if they cannot proportionally lessen their outgoings, they must come to poverty. If we were young enough to begin business again, it might be another matter, but I doubt we are past it, and business not well managed ruins one faster than no business. In short,

with frugality and prudent care, we may subsist decently on what we have, and leave it entire to our children, but without such care we shall not be able to keep it together; it will melt away like butter in the sunshine, and we may live long enough to feel the miserable consequences of our indiscretion.

"I know very little of the gentleman or his character, nor can I at this distance. I hope his expectations are not great of any fortune to be had with our daughter, before our death. I can only say that if he proves a good husband to her, and a good son to me, he shall find me as good a father as I can be; but at present, I suppose you would agree with me, that we cannot do more than fit her out handsomely in clothes and furniture, not exceeding whole five hundred pounds of value. For the rest, they must depend, as you and I did, on their own industry and care, as what remains in our hands will be barely sufficient for our support, and not enough for them when it comes to be divided at our decease.

. . . . .  
 "I suppose the blue room is too blue, the wood being of the same color with the paper, and so looks too dark. I would have you furnish, as soon as you can, thus; paint the wainscot a dead white; paper the walls blue, and tack the gilt border round, just above the surbase, and under the cornices. If the paper is not equally colored, when pasted on, let it be brushed over again with the same color, and let the *papier maché* musical figures be tacked to the middle of the ceiling. When this is done, I think it will look very well.

"I am glad to hear that Sally keeps up, and increases the number of her friends. The best wishes of a fond father for her happiness, always attend her."

The young gentleman here referred to was

Richard Bache, to whom Sarah Franklin was married on the twenty-ninth of the following October, in her twenty-third year.

In August, 1767, again in company with his "steady, good friend," Sir John Pringle, Franklin visited Paris. In a letter from that city, the fourteenth of the month, to Miss Stevenson, he says :

"All the way to Dover we were furnished with post-chaises, hung so as to lean forward, the top coming down over our eyes, like a hood, as if to prevent one's seeing the country; which, being one of my great pleasures, I was in perpetual disputes with the innkeepers, ostlers, and postillions, about getting the straps taken up a hole or two before, and let down as much behind, they insisting that the chaise leaning forward was an ease to the horses, and that the contrary would kill them. I suppose the chaise leaning forward looks to them like a willingness to go forward, and that its hanging back shows reluctance. . . . .

"At Dover, the next morning, we embarked for Calais, with a number of passengers, who had never before been at sea. They would previously make a hearty breakfast, because, if the wind should fail, we might not get over till supper time. Doubtless they thought that, when they had paid for their breakfast, they had a right to it, and that when they had swallowed it, they were sure of it. But they had scarce been out half an hour, before the sea laid claim to it, and they were obliged to deliver it up. So that it seems there are uncertainties, even beyond those between the cup and the lip. If ever you go to sea, take my advice, and live sparingly a day or two beforehand. The sickness, if any, will be lighter, and sooner over. We got to Calais that evening. . . .

"The roads we found equally good with ours in England,

in some places paved with smooth stones, like our new streets, for many miles together, and rows of trees on each side, and yet there are no turnpikes. But then the poor peasants complained to us grievously, that they were obliged to work upon the roads full two months in the year, without being paid for their labor. . . .

"The women we saw at Calais, on the road, at Boulogne, and in the inns and villages, were generally of dark complexion; but arriving at Abbeville, we found a sudden change, a multitude of both women and men in that place appearing remarkably fair. Whether this is owing to a small colony of spinners and wool-combers and weavers, brought hither from Holland with the woollen manufactory, about sixty years ago, or to their being less exposed to the sun than in other places, I know not. . . .

"As soon as we left Abbeville, the swarthiness returned. I speak generally; for here are some fair women at Paris, who, I think, are not whitened by art. As to rouge, they don't pretend to imitate nature in laying it on. There is no gradual diminution of the color, from the bloom in the middle of the cheek to the faint tint near the sides, nor does it show itself differently in different faces. I have not had the honor of being at any lady's toilette to see how it is laid on, but I fancy I can tell how it is or may be done. Cut a hole of three inches diameter, in a piece of paper; place it on the side of your face in such a manner as that the top of the hole may be just under the eye; then, with a brush dipped in the color, paint face and paper together; so when the paper is taken off, there will remain a round patch of red, exactly the form of the hole. This is the mode, from the actresses on the stage, upwards through all ranks of ladies to the princesses of the blood; but it stops there, the Queen not using it, having in the serenity, complacence, and benignity that shine so eminently in, or rather through



her countenance, sufficient beauty, though now an old woman, to do extremely well without it.

“You see I speak of the Queen as if I had seen her; and so I have, for you must know I have been to court. We went to Versailles last Sunday, and had the honor of being presented to the King [Louis XV.]; he spoke to both of us very graciously and very cheerfully, is a handsome man, has a very lively look, and appears a younger man than he is. In the evening we were at the *Grand Couvert*, where the family sup in public. The table was half a hollow square, the service gold. When either made a sign for drink, the word was given by one of the waiters; *A votre pour le Roi*, or *A votre pour la Reine*. Then two persons came from within; the one with wine and the other with water in *carafes*; each drank a little glass of what he brought, and then put both the *carafes* with a glass on a salver, and then presented it. Their distance from each other was such, as that other chairs might have been placed between any two of them. An officer of the court brought us up through the crowd of spectators, and placed Sir John so as to stand between the Queen and Madame Victoire. The King talked a good deal to Sir John, asking many questions about our regal family; and did me too the honor of taking some notice of me; that is saying enough; for I would not have you think me so much pleased with this King and Queen, as to have a whit less regard than I used to have for ours. No Frenchman shall go beyond me in thinking my own King and Queen the very best in the world, and the most amiable.”

And the person who said this was Dr. Franklin, and the king was George the Third! But the time was not distant, when the Doctor, who now imagined himself so very loyal, would see his “amiable” monarch in quite another light. The letter goes on to say :

“Versailles has had infinite sums laid out in building it and supplying it with water. Some say the expenses exceeded eighty millions sterling. The range of buildings is immense; the garden-front most magnificent, of hewn stone; the number of statues, figures, urns, &c., in marble and bronze of exquisite workmanship is beyond conception. But the water-works are out of repair, and so is great part of the front next the town, looking with its shabby, half-brick walls, and broken windows, not much better than the houses in Durham Yard. There is, in short, both at Versailles and Paris, a prodigious mixture of magnificence and negligence, with every kind of elegance, except that of cleanliness, and what we call *tidiness*. Though I must do Paris the justice to say, that in two parts of cleanliness they exceed us. The water they drink, though from the river, they render as pure as that of the best spring by filtering it through cisterns filled with sand; and the streets with constant sweeping are fit to walk in, though there is no paved foot-path. Accordingly, many well-dressed people are constantly seen walking in them. The crowd of coaches and chaises for this reason is not so great. Men, as well as women, carry umbrellas in their hands, which they extend in case of rain or too much sun; and, a man with an umbrella not taking up more than three foot square, or nine square feet of the street, when, if in a coach, he would take up two hundred and forty square feet, you can easily conceive, that though the streets here are narrow, they may be much less incumbered. They are extremely well paved, and the stones, being generally cubes, when worn on one side, may be turned and become new.

“The civilities we everywhere receive give us the strongest impressions of the French politeness. It seems to be a point settled here universally, that strangers are to be treated with respect; and one has just the same deference

shown one here by being a stranger, as in England by being a lady.

“The custom-house officers at Port St. Denis, as we entered Paris, were about to seize two dozen of excellent Bordeaux wine given us at Boulogne, and which we brought with us; but, as soon as they found we were strangers, it was immediately remitted on that account. At the church of Notre Dame, where we went to see a magnificent illumination, with figures, &c., for the deceased Dauphiness, we found an immense crowd, who were kept out by guards; but, the officer being told that we were strangers from England, he immediately admitted us, accompanied us and showed us everything. Why don't we practice this urbanity to Frenchmen? Why should they be allowed to outdo us in everything? . . .

“Travelling is one way of lengthening life, at least in appearance. It is but about a fortnight since we left London, but the variety of scenes we have gone through, makes it seem equal to six months living in one place. Perhaps I have suffered a greater change too, in my own person, than I could have done in six years at home. I had not been here six days, before my tailor and perruquier had transformed me into a Frenchman. Only think what a figure I make in a little bag-wig and with naked ears! They told me I was become twenty years younger, and looked gallant.

And pray look upon it as no small matter, that, surrounded as I am by all the glories of the world, and amusements of all sorts, I remember you and Dolly and all the dear good folks at Bromley. It is true, I cannot help it, but must and ever shall remember you all with pleasure.

“Need I add, that I am particularly, my dear good friend,

“Yours most affectionately.”

## CHAPTER XXX.

*Obnoxious Acts of Parliament. — Duties on Tea, Paper, Glass, and Other Imported Articles. — American Manufactures Forbidden. — Outbreaks in America. — Dr. Franklin Writes for the London Chronicle, on Causes of the American Discontents. — Letter to His Wife. — Acknowledges Receipt of Apples, Indian Meal, etc. — American Nuts. — Lady Bathurst. — Election of a New Parliament. — John Wilkes. — Riots. — Dr. Franklin artfully Approached by Friends of the Government. — Office of Under Secretary. — Not to be Bought. — Letter to His Sister. — To His Son. — Mr. Grenville. — Franklin's Son. — Wishes to Return Home. — Still Delayed. — Agent for Georgia. — Letter to John Alleyne. — Early Marriages. — Letter of Advice to Miss Stevenson. — Treatment of the Aged. — Chosen President of the American Philosophical Society. — A Practical Philosopher. — A Telescope for Harvard College. — Oats. — Swiss Barley. — Culture of Silk. — Smoky Chimneys. — Oxen on the Farm. — Rhubarb. — Chinese Cheese. — Construction of French Houses. — Letter to John Bartram. — Parmesan Cheese. — Letter to His Wife. — His Health. — Letter from Miss Stevenson. —*

*A Young Physician. — Dr. Franklin's Reply. — Phonography. — Modesty in Opinions. — Pope's Rule. — Letter to Miss Stevenson about a Proposal of Marriage. — What He Thinks of Giving Advice.*

THE repeal of the Stamp Act was followed by other Acts equally obnoxious to the Americans. They were taxed on many of the most common articles, as glass, paper, tea, painters, colors, etc., a set of commissioners being sent over to attend to the collection of these duties. Every means was employed to forbid or discourage manufactures in the colonies.\* The hatters of England had got an act passed compelling the Americans to send their beavers abroad to be made into hats, and the nail and steel-makers had prevailed on Parliament to forbid the erection of slitting and steel furnaces in America. Not an article could the colonists manufacture out of the iron that abounded in the country, except for private use. No wool could be sold from town to town, nor a hat from one colony to another. And further, Great Britain not only put duties upon her own manufactures exported to America, but forbade the colonists to trade with any other country, or export to England their own merchandise, except in British vessels. Wine, fruit and oil were not allowed to be brought direct from Spain and Portugal, nor could iron be carried direct to foreign markets. The interests of

\* Sparks, and Speech of E. C. Cowdin.

English manufactures and trades must be exclusively consulted.

No wonder the Americans thought England was a strange mother, or that their indignation sometimes exceeded the bounds of propriety. And when troops were stationed in Boston and New York to restrain these popular outbreaks, the people became still more excited and alarmed. These demonstrations, many of which were regretted by the more prudent Americans, were made use of in England to damage the just claims of the colonies, and to provoke more stringent measures against them.

Dr. Franklin, ever watchful for the interests of the colonies, felt called upon to write an article for the *London Chronicle*, Causes of the American Discontents, for the purpose of calming the public excitement against America. The editor took the liberty to prune it of what he regarded offensive passages: "He has drawn the teeth," says the author, "and pared the nails of my paper, so that it can neither scratch nor bite. It seems only to paw and mumble." This was in 1768.

In February of that year, Franklin wrote to his wife:

"I have received also the Indian and buckwheat meal,  
 . . . with the apples, cranberries and nuts, for all  
 which I thank you. They all prove good, and the apples  
 were particularly welcome to me and my friends, as there  
 happens to be scarce of any kind in England this year . . .

"I am much concerned for my dear sister's love of her

daughter. It was kind in you to write a letter of condolence. I have also written to her upon the occasion. I am not determined about bringing Sally\* over with me, but am obliged to you for the kind manner in which you speak of it, and possibly I may conclude to do it. . . .

"P. S. I forgot to tell you that a certain great lady, the best woman in England, was graciously pleased to accept some of your nuts, and to say they were excellent."

With these nuts, he sent the following note :

"Dr. Franklin presents his respectful compliments to Lord Bathurst, with some American nuts; and to Lady Bathurst with some American apples; which he prays they will accept as a tribute from that country, small indeed, but *voluntary*."

About this time, the country was agitated over the election of a new Parliament.

"All the members," says Franklin, "are now in their counties and boroughs, among their drunken electors. . . . It is thought that near two millions will be spent this election; but those who understand figures and act by computation, say the crown has two millions a year in places and pensions to dispose of."

In London, especially, there was intense excitement about John Wilkes, "an outlaw and an exile," says Franklin, "of bad personal character, not worth a farthing," who came over from France, and "set himself up as a candidate for the capital of the kingdom;" a worthless demagogue who turned the heads of the populace by abusing the government, and making great pretensions to be a friend of liberty.

\* Sally Franklin, daughter of Thomas Franklin, a remote family connection. As her father was poor, Dr. Franklin took charge of her for several years.

"London was illuminated two nights running at the command of the mob, for the success of Wilkes, in the Middlesex election. The second night exceeded anything of the kind ever seen here on the greatest occasions of rejoicing, as even the small cross-streets, lanes, courts, and other out-of-the-way places were all in a blaze with lights, and the principal streets, all night long, as the mobs went round again, after two o'clock, and obliged people who had extinguished their candles to light them again. Those who refused had their windows all destroyed. The damage done and expense of candles have been computed at fifty thousand pounds:

Writing about a month later, he said :

"Even this capital, the residence of the king, is now a daily scene of lawless riot and confusion. Mobs patrolling the streets at noonday, some knocking all down that will not roar for Wilkes and liberty; courts of justice afraid to give judgment against him; coal-heavers and porters pulling down the houses of coal-merchants, that refuse to give them more wages; sawyers destroying saw-mills; sailors unrigging all the outward bound ships, and suffering none to sail till merchants agree to raise their pay; watermen destroying private boats, and threatening bridges; soldiers firing among the mobs, and killing men, women and children, which seems only to have produced a universal sullenness, that looks like a great black cloud coming on, ready to burst in a general tempest.

"While I am writing, a great mob of coal-porters fills the street, carrying a wretch of their business upon poles to be ducked, and otherwise to be punished at their pleasure, for working at the old wages. All respect to law and government seems to be lost among the common people, who are, moreover, continually inflamed by seditious scribblers, to trample on authority, and everything that used to keep them to order."



About six weeks later, July 2nd, he writes :

"The tumults and disorders that prevailed here lately, have now pretty well subsided. Wilkes' outlawry is reversed, but he is sentenced to twenty-two months imprisonment, and one thousand pounds fine. . . . The importation of corn, a pretty good hay harvest, now near over, and the prospect of plenty from a fine crop of wheat, make the poor more patient."

Meanwhile Franklin had been approached by leading men in the government, with reference to his appointment to some important office ; that of Under-Secretary of State, as some said. And certainly it would have been a great gain to the ministry to secure, as a permanent friend of English interests, a man of so much consequence as Franklin. A report that he was not disinclined to listen to such a proposal went to America, and was diligently spread by his enemies there. A letter from his sister, at Boston, expressed much concern about it, and in his reply he said :

"I am now grown too old to be ambitious of such a station as that which you say has been mentioned to you. Repose is more fit for me, and much more suitable to my wishes. There is no danger of such a thing being offered to me, and I am sure I shall never ask it. But even if it were offered, I certainly could not accept it, to act under such instructions as I know must be given with it. So you may be quite easy on that head."

In a letter to his son, the governor, referring to the Duke of Grafton, he said :

"I must tell you that, though I did not think fit to decline any favor so great a man expressed an inclination to do

me, because, at court, if one shows an unwillingness to be obliged, it is often construed as a mark of mental hostility, and one makes an enemy; yet, so great is my inclination to be at home and at rest, that I shall not be sorry if this business falls through, and I am suffered to retire with my old post (as Postmaster General); nor, indeed, very sorry if they take that from me too, on account of my zeal for America, in which some of my friends have hinted to me that I have been too open. . . . If Mr. Grenville [the author of the Stamp Act] comes into power again, in any department respecting America, I must refuse to accept of anything that may seem to put me in his power, because I apprehend a breach between the two countries; and that refusal might give offence. So that, you see, a turn of a die may make a great difference in our affairs. We may be either promoted or discarded; one or the other seems likely soon to be the case, but it is hard to divine which. I am, myself, grown so old (now sixty-two), as to feel much less than formerly the spur of ambition; and, if it were not for the flattering expectation, that by being here I might more effectually serve my country, I should certainly determine for retirement, without a moment's hesitation."

It is plain that Franklin's acceptance of office, should a place be offered him, if considered at all, could only be under a ministry friendly to America, and in the expectation of such a policy being pursued as would satisfy her people and make them a contented portion of the British Empire. At no rate would he take office under a ministry like that of Grenville.

Whatever the hints or proposals of this or that great man may have amounted to, no offer seems ever to have been formally made, and after

awhile Franklin heard no more of the subject; which was fortunate, for himself and for America. As an English place-holder, his voice for the country of his birth would have been comparatively hesitating and feeble, though it could not possibly have been silenced; or else a rupture would have come, that must have widened the breach. From such a calamity and snare the father was saved; while the son, less nobly endowed, yielded and was entrapped.

Franklin now thought of returning to America. In the present troubled state of affairs, the business of his Agency could not be prosecuted successfully, and his private concerns required his personal attention at home. But his appointment as agent for Georgia determined him to delay his return.

Amid these political affairs, he was ready to turn his thoughts to other themes, when he could serve his friends. One of them, John Alleyne, having taken a step for which some persons had blamed him, wished to obtain the opinion of so wise a man as Franklin, which he gave in a letter:

"Dear Jack, you desire, you say, my impartial thoughts on the subject of an early marriage, by way of answer to the numberless objections that have been made by numerous persons to your own. You may remember, when you consulted me on the occasion, that I thought youth on both sides to be no objection. Indeed, from the marriages that have fallen under my observation, I am rather inclined to think that early ones stand the best chance of happiness. The temper and habits of the young are not become so stiff

and uncomplying, as when more advanced in life: they form more easily to each other, and hence many occasions of disgust are removed. . . .

“With us in America, marriages are generally in the morning of life; our children are therefore educated and settled in the world by noon; and thus, our business being done, we have an afternoon and evening of cheerful leisure to ourselves. . . .

“In fine, I am glad you are married, and congratulate you most cordially upon it. You are now in the way of becoming a useful citizen, and you have escaped the unnatural state of celibacy for life, the fate of many here, who never intended it, but who, having too long postponed the change of their condition, find at length that it is too late to think of it, and so live all their lives in a situation that greatly lessens a man’s value. An odd volume of a set of books bears not the value of its proportion to the set. What think you of the odd half of a pair of scissors? It cannot well cut anything; it may possibly serve to scrape a trencher.

“Pray make my compliments and best wishes acceptable to your bride. I am old and heavy, or I should ere this have presented them in person. I shall make but small use of the old man’s privilege, that of giving advice to younger friends. Treat your wife always with respect; it will procure respect to you, not only from her, but from all that observe it. Never use a slighting expression to her, even in jest, for slights in jest, after frequent bandying, are apt to end in angry earnest. Be studious in your profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich. Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be in general virtuous, and you will be happy. At least, you will, by such conduct, stand the best chance for such consequences. I pray God to bless you both;

“being YOUR EVER AFFECTIONATE FRIEND.”

About two months later, his friend Miss Stevenson sought his advice as to her duty towards an aged female friend or relative. This person had been under her care, but some infelicities of temper on the part of the former had led to a separation. But it was evident that, with her infirmities, she was unhappy apart from the company and care of her young friend, and it was a question with Miss Stevenson whether she ought not to live with her, though it might be inconsistent with her happiness or interest. She wanted to know the Doctor's opinion. He replied :

“My advice must be, that you return to her as soon as the time proposed for your visit is expired; and that you continue, by every means in your power, to make the remainder of her days as comfortable to her as possible. Invent amusements for her; be pleased when she accepts of them, and patient when she perhaps peevishly rejects them. I know this is hard, but I think you are equal to it; not from any servility of temper, but from abundant goodness. . .

“Nothing is more apt to sour the temper of aged people, than the apprehension that they are neglected; and they are extremely apt to entertain such suspicions. It was therefore that I proposed asking her to be of our late party; but, your mother disliking it, the motion was dropped, as some others have been, by my too great easiness, contrary to my judgment. Not but that I was sensible her being with us might have lessened our pleasures, but I hoped it might have prevented you some pain.

“In fine, nothing can contribute to true happiness, that is inconsistent with duty; nor can a course of action, conformable to it, be finally without an ample reward. For God

governor; and he is *good*. I pray him to direct you; and, indeed, you will never be without his direction, if you humbly ask it, and show yourself always ready to obey it. Farewell, *my dear friend*, and believe me ever sincerely and affectionately *yours*."

This letter is alike honorable to the writer, and to the lady to whom it was addressed.

It was about this time that the King of Denmark, Christian VII., visited England. He sought the acquaintance of the world-renowned philosopher, and when he made a dinner-party, of sixteen guests, most of them foreign ambassadors and officers of distinction, Franklin was one of the company.

It was not long after, that he received a gratifying mark of respect from his own countrymen. He was chosen President of the American Philosophical Society; an honor continued to him from year to year as long as he lived. He felt a deep interest in its objects, and contributed to its Transactions some valuable papers.

He was not a mere philosopher of the closet; whatever he discovered or observed, he sought to turn to some practical account for the benefit of his fellow men. He put himself to much pains to obtain and send over to America, a telescope for Harvard College, and he also procured from Mr. Ellicot "the glasses etc., of the long Galilean telescope" which he had presented to the College. In a letter to his wife, near the close of the year, he speaks of sending over some new kind of oats, free from husks,

and some Swiss barley, six rows to an ear, which he wished distributed among his friends.

He also endeavored to promote the culture of silk in America. In letters to Lord Kames, not long after, he gave some advice about smoky chimneys, and expressed his preference of oxen to horses for farming purposes. He sent over to America "some of the true rhubarb seed," some "green dry peas, for making pea-soup," "some Chinese *caravances*, with Father Narasette's account of the universal use of a cheese made of them in China, "which," he added, "so excited my curiosity, that I caused inquiry to be made of Mr. Flint, who lived many years there, in what manner the cheese was made. I have since learned, that some runnings of salt (I suppose runnet) is put into water, when the meal is in it, to turn it to curds." During a visit he made to Paris, he took particular notice of the construction of the houses, with reference to security from fire.

"We scarcely ever hear of fire in Paris," he says. "The roofs are slate or tile, the walls are stone, the walls generally lined with stucco or plaster, instead of wainscot, the floors of stucco, or of six square tiles painted brown, or of flag stone, or of marble; if any floors were wood, it was of oak wood, which is not so inflammable as pine. Carpets prevent the coldness of stone or brick floors offending the feet in winter, and the noise of treading on such floors overhead, is less inconvenient than on boards. The stairs, too, at Paris, are either stone or brick, with only a wooden edge or corner for the step; so that on the whole, though the Parisians commonly burn wood in their chimneys, a more

dangerous kind of fuel than that used here, yet their houses escape extremely well, as there is little in a room that can be consumed by fire except the furniture; whereas in London, perhaps scarcely a year passes in which half a million of property and many lives are not lost by this destructive element."

He also made inquiries about covering houses with copper, and gave a description of the method, in a letter to a friend.

In a letter to John Bartram, a noted botanist, urging him to put his observations of nature into a book, Franklin showed the very practical character of his mind:

"Many people, are fond of accounts of old buildings and monuments; but there is a number who would be much better pleased with such accounts as you could afford them. And, for one, I confess, that if I could find in any Italian travels a receipt for making Parmesan cheese, it would give me more satisfaction than a transcript of any inscription from any old stone whatever."

A little more sentiment in his nature need not, we think, have made him less useful to mankind.

In the letter to his wife, just above referred to, he speaks thus of himself:

"For my own part, I think of late that my constitution rather mends. I have had but one touch of the gout, and that a light one, since I left you. . . . I feel stronger and more active. Yet I would not have you think that I fancy I shall grow young again. I know that men of my bulk often fail suddenly. I know that, according to the course of nature, I cannot at most continue much longer, and that the living even of another day is uncertain. I



therefore form no schemes, but such as are of immediate execution, indulging myself in no future prospect except one, that of returning to Philadelphia, there to spend the evening of my life with my friends and family."

And yet this old man of sixty-three, writing about his looking for death daily, lived more than twenty years after this, years filled with useful and brilliant deeds.

That he was not always in quite so serious a mood, appears from the lively correspondence that passed between him and his friend Miss Stevenson about her intended marriage. She had written to him :

"I met with a very sensible physician yesterday, who prescribes abstinence for the cure of consumptions. He must be clever, because he thinks as we do. I would not have you or mother surprised, if I should run off with this young man. To be sure it would be an imprudent step, at the discreet age of thirty; but there is no saying what one should do, if solicited by a young man of an insinuating address and good person, though he may be too young for one, and not yet established in his profession. He engaged me so deeply in conversation, and I was so much pleased with him, that I thought it necessary to give you warning, though I assure you he has made no *proposal*.

"How I rattle! This flight must be owing to this new acquaintance, or to the joy of hearing my old one is returned to this country\*. I know which I attribute it to, for I can tell when my spirits were enlivened; but you may think as you please, if you will believe me to be, dear sir,

Your truly affectionate

"HUMBLE SERVANT."

\* From a trip to France.

To which, after speaking of other things, he replied :

"However, there are certain circumstances in life, sometimes, where it is perhaps not best to hearken to reason. For instance; possibly, if the truth were known, I have reason to be jealous of this same insinuating, handsome young physician; but, as it flatters more my vanity, and therefore gives me more pleasure, to suppose you were in spirits on account of my safe return, I shall turn a deaf ear to reason in this case, as I have done with success in twenty others. But I am sure you will always give me reason enough to continue ever,

"YOUR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND."

It was previous to this, that he wrote to this lady about a "reformed alphabet," on the principle of phonography; and it was doubtless when her mind was yet unoccupied by insinuating physicians, that she made inquiries about the construction of chimneys, under an unknown date; to which the doctor replied in a practical and complimentary way. After giving his opinion about the draft of chimneys, which, it seems, had been a subject of discussion, he adds :

"So you see I think you had the best of the argument; and, as you, notwithstanding, gave it up in complaisance to the company, I think you had also the best of the dispute. There are few, though convinced, that know how to give up even an error they have once been engaged in maintaining; there is, therefore, the more merit in dropping a contest where one thinks one's self right, 't is, at least, respectful to those we converse with. And, indeed, all our knowledge is so imperfect, and we are, from a thousand causes so perpetually subject to mistake and error, that positiveness can scarce ever become even the most knowing; and modesty in

advancing any opinion, however plain and true we may suppose it, is always decent, and generally more likely to procure assent. Pope's rule, —

‘To speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence,’

is, therefore, a good one; and, if I had ever seen in your conversation the least deviation from it, I should earnestly recommend it to your observation.”

When, at a later date, a “proposal” had been made, and she wrote to ask the Doctor's opinion about her accepting it, he replied that he saw no objection to it, and added gracefully :

“I see your delicacy and your humility, too; for you fancy that if you do not prove a great fortune, you will not be loved; but I am sure, were I in his situation in every respect, knowing you so well as I do, and esteeming you so highly, I should think you a fortune sufficient for me without a shilling.”

The good Doctor, in the present case, was sure that his approval of the marriage would entirely coincide with the lady's wishes, and he was ready to give it; but his opinion of advice in general may be learned from what he said to a person who wrote to him about a young man under his charge :

“As to my reproving and advising him, which you desire, he has not hitherto appeared to need it, which is lucky, as I am not fond of giving advice, having seldom seen it taken.

• • • An Italian poet, in his account of a voyage to the moon, tells us that

‘All things lost on earth are treasured there.’

On which somebody observed, there must then be in the moon a great deal of *good advice*”

£200. — *Letter to his Daughter.* — *Advises her to "Learn Accounts."* — *Fate of one of the Squirrels.* — *Epitaph to "Poor Mungo"* — *Letter to Miss Shipley.*

INSTEAD of returning to America, as he had hoped, Dr. Franklin found the necessity for a longer stay in England becoming every day more urgent. Besides the agency of his own province, and the general interests of the colonies, he was agent of Georgia, and afterwards of New Jersey and Massachusetts.

The people of the colonies had determined not to submit to the tax imposed on imported articles, as a means of compelling from Parliament an acknowledgment of their rights. Their resistance was peaceful, not to import and not to use British manufactures. In July, 1769, in reply to a communication from Philadelphia merchants, containing a copy of their agreement against importation, he said :

"By persisting steadily in the measures you have so audably entered into, I hope you will, if backed by the general honest resolution of the people to buy British goods of no others, but to manufacture for themselves, or use colony manufactures only, be the means, under God, of recovering and establishing the freedom of our country entire, and of handing it down complete to posterity."

In October, of the same year, he received from Boston a gratifying testimonial of the es-

timation in which he was there held, contained in a letter from a committee of the town, bearing the signatures of Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, James Otis, Joseph Warren, Richard Dana, Joshua Henshaw, Joseph Jackson and Benjamin Kent.

"The town of Boston," they say, "are fully sensible of your extensive influence, and, from your past conduct, have the strongest reason to assure themselves that you will exert your great abilities in promoting the united interests of Great Britain and her colonies.

"The happiness of British subjects is founded on the freedom of the Constitution; and, in behalf of the town of Boston, we beg you would always, and particularly at this time, defend this injured town against the injurious calumnies of those who wish the total abolition of liberty, both in Great Britain and America."

A rumor having reached his sister, Mrs. Mecom, that, for the free expression of his opinions in letters to America, he was to be punished by being removed from the Post-office, he wrote to her that the abuse of his enemies should not provoke him to *resign*: "If they would have my office, they must take it." He added, that no threat could make the least change in his political conduct.

"My rule, in which I have always found satisfaction, is never to turn aside in public affairs, through views of private interest; but to go straight forward in doing what appears to me right at the time, leaving the consequences with Providence. What in my younger days enabled me more easily to walk upright was, that I had a trade, and

contented with the plentiful supplies my business afforded me. And now it is still more easy for me to preserve my freedom and integrity, when I consider that I am almost at the end of my journey, and therefore need less to complete the expense of it; and that what I now possess, through the blessing of God, with tolerable economy, will be sufficient for me (great misfortunes excepted), though I should add nothing more to it by any office or employment whatsoever."

In 1771, Dr. Franklin visited several of his friends in different parts of England. He was intimate with Dr. Priestley and Dr. Erasmus Darwin, and at their homes discussed subjects of science and assisted them in philosophical experiments. With the former he found also political sympathy; with the latter he had corresponded before coming to England. A letter which Dr. Darwin sent to Franklin, complimenting him on his discoveries, was addressed "Dr. Franklin, America," and he said he felt inclined to make a still more flattering superscription, "Dr. Franklin, the World." An answer which came to the writer proved that the letter actually reached its destination.

The tour was extended through Wales, Ireland, Scotland and the north of England, greatly to the improvement of his health. He was able to spend several months in this agreeable way, as no business of importance relating to American affairs then occupied the attention of Parliament.

In Ireland, where he spent seven weeks, he

reason, he was all smiles. That he might make Franklin's stay more agreeable, "he put his eldest son, Lord Killwarling, into his phaeton with me, to drive me a round of forty miles, that I might see the country, the seats, and manufactures, covering me with his own great coat, lest I should take cold." The shrewd American understood this to be more policy than friendship; for he adds:

"If he takes no steps towards withdrawing the troops, repealing the duties, restoring the Castle [a fortification in Boston Harbor], or recalling the offensive instructions [to English officials in America], I shall think all the plausible behavior I have described is meant only, by patting and stroking the horse, to make him more patient, while the reins are drawn tighter, and the spurs set deeper in his sides."

That he was not mistaken in his estimate of his Lordship, appears from what happened afterwards. Writing to his son, some months later he says:

"As Lord Hillsborough in fact got nothing out of me, I should rather suppose he threw me away as an orange that would yield no juice, and therefore not worth more squeezing. When I had been a little while returned to London, I waited on him to thank him for his civilities in Ireland, and to discourse with him on a Georgia affair. The porter told me he was not at home. I left my card, went another time, and received the same answer, though I knew he was at home, a friend of mine being with him. After intermis-

larly have on the birthdays of any of their own six children, who were all but one at table, where there was also a clergyman's widow, now above one hundred years old. The chief toast of the day was, Master Benjamin Bache, which the venerable old lady began in a bumper of *mountain*. The Bishop's lady politely added, 'and that he may be as good a man as his grandfather.' I said I hoped he would be *much better*. The Bishop, still more complaisant than his lady, said, 'We will compound the matter, and be contented if he should not prove *quite so good*.' "

All which must have been delightful reading to the proud mother, and no less fond grandmother.

Franklin was fond of children ; and writing to Mrs. Hewson, who, as Mary Stevenson, had so submissively followed the Doctor's advice, and was now the happy mother of a son, named William after the son of her friend the philosopher, he said ;

"Pray let him have everything he likes. I think it of great consequence while the features of the countenance are forming; it gives them a pleasant air, and, that being once become natural and fixed by habit, the face is ever after the handsomer for it, and on that much of a person's good fortune and success in life may depend. Had I been crossed as much in my infant likings and inclinations as you know I have been of late years, I should have been, I was going to say, not near so handsome; but as the vanity of that expression would offend other folks' vanity, I change it, out of regard to them, and say, a great deal more homely."

During his visit to Ireland and Scotland, he was led to contrast those      tries with his own.



safe and well. . . . A hundred thanks are sent you for them." They were intended for his young friends at the Bishop of Asaph's, whom he had taken this pleasant way of gratifying. He acknowledges also "the buckwheat and Indian meal," that would be "a great refreshment" to him in the winter; the "dried peaches" also, especially those dried "without their skins;" the apples also, "the best he ever had;" but "the sturgeon did not come," which was "not so material." "Since," he says, "I cannot be in America, everything that comes from there comforts me a little, as being something like home." To this he adds, that he had given his son-in-law two hundred pounds, "to add something to his cargo," for setting up trade in Philadelphia. In a letter to his daughter, the next day, he advised her to learn accounts, so as to aid her husband, and to practice industry and frugality; and he added that, till his return, she need be at no expense for rent, "as you are all welcome to continue with your mother; and, indeed, it seems to be your duty to attend her, as she grows infirm, and takes much delight in your company and the child's." And, lastly, what he knew would go home to her heart, he added: "I am much pleased with the account I receive from all hands of your dear little boy."

We must not close this chapter without referring to the melancholy fate of one of the

Learn hence,  
Ye who blindly seek more liberty,  
Whether subjects, sons, squirrels or daughters,  
That apparent restraint may be real protection,  
Yielding peace and plenty  
With security.

“ You see, my dear miss, how much more decent and proper this broken style is, than if we were to say, by way of epitaph:

Here Skugg  
Lies snug  
As a bug  
In a rug.

And yet, perhaps, there are people in the world of so little feeling, as to think that this would be a good-enough epitaph for poor Mrngo.

“ If you wish it, I shall procure another to succeed him; but perhaps you will now choose some other amusement.”

farther in colony affairs for the present, either to lay more duties or to repeal any. . . . I have, indeed, so many good kind friends here, that I could spend the remainder of my life among them with great pleasure, if it were not for my American connexions, and the indelible affection I retain for that dear country, from which I have so long been in a state of exile. My love to Betsy."

But circumstances occurring from time to time, relating to his various agencies, and the hope of a favorable change in the spirit of the Parliament, still kept him at his post. There was a prospect, too, of a change of ministry; that Hillsborough would be superseded by Lord Dartmouth. Writing to his son in August, he says of his situation, that "nothing could be more agreeable," especially as he hoped for "less emb. rassment from the new minister."

"My company is so much desired, that I seldom dine at home in winter, and could spend the whole summer in the country-houses of inviting friends, if I chose it. Learned and ingenious foreigners, that come to England, almost all make a point of visiting me; for my reputation is still higher abroad than here. Several of the foreign ambassadors have assiduously cultivated my acquaintance, treating me as one of their *corps*. . . .

"These are flattering circumstances; but a violent longing for home seizes me, which I can no otherwise subdue but by promising myself a return next spring or next fall."

About this time, he was appointed one of a Committee of the Royal Society, who were to examine some government powder-works, in or-

The laugh was soon turned upon the opponents of Franklin's rods, the "great George" himself not being spared in an epigram published at the time:

"While you, great GEORGE, for safety hunt,  
And sharp conductors change for blunt,  
The empire's out of joint.  
Franklin a wiser course pursues,  
And all your thunder fearless views,  
By sticking to the *point*."

Franklin also made experiments showing the effect of oil in stilling waves. In a letter, dated November 7th, 1773, he says:

"I had, when a youth, read and smiled at Pliny's account of a practice among the seamen of his time, to still the waves in a storm by pouring oil into the sea. . . .

"In 1757, being at sea in a fleet of ninety-six sail bound against Louisburg, I observed the wakes of two of the ships to be remarkably smooth, while all the others were ruffled by the wind, which blew fresh. Being puzzled with the differing appearance, I at last pointed it out to our captain, and asked him the meaning of it. 'The cooks,' says he, 'have, I suppose, been just emptying their greasy water through the scuppers, which has greased the sides of those ships a little.' . . . Afterwards, being again at sea in 1762, I first observed the wonderful quietness of oil on agitated water, in the swinging glass lamp I made to hang up in the cabin. . . . An old sea-captain, then a passenger with me, said [it] was a practice of the Bermudians [to put oil on water to smooth it] when they would strike fish which they could not see, if the surface of the *Water* was ruffled

heard it was a practice with the fishermen of Lisbon when about to return into the river, if they saw before them too great a surf upon the bar, to empty a bottle or two of oil into the sea, which would suppress the breakers, and allow them to pass safely. [By] another person, who had often been in the Mediterranean, I was informed that the divers there, who, when under water in their business, need light, which the curling of the surface interrupts by the refraction of so many little waves, let a small quantity of oil now and then out of their mouths, which rising to the surface smooths it, and permits the light to come down to them. . . .

"At length, being at Clapham, where there is a large pond, which I observed one day to be very rough with the wind, I fetched out a cruet of oil, and dropped a little on the water. I saw it spread itself with surprising swiftness upon the surface; but the effect of smoothing the waves was not produced, for I had applied it first on the leeward side of the pond, where the waves were largest, and the wind drove my oil back upon the shore. I then went to the windward side where they began to form; and there the oil, though not more than a teaspoonful, produced an instant calm over a space several yards square, which spread amazingly and extended itself gradually till it reached the lee side, making all that quarter of the pond, perhaps half an acre, as smooth as a looking-glass.

"After this, I contrived to take with me, whenever I went into the country, a little oil in the upper hollow joint of my bamboo cane, with which I might repeat the experiment as opportunity should offer, and I found it constantly to succeed.

"In these experiments, one circumstance struck me with particular surprise. This was the sudden, wide, and forcible spreading of a drop of oil on the face of the water. It seems as if a mutual repulsion between its particles took place as

soon as it touched the water, and a repulsion so strong as to act on other bodies swimming on the surface, as straw, reaves, chips, etc., forcing them to recede every way from the drop, as from a centre, leaving a large, clear space. . . .

"A gentleman from Rhode Island told me it had been remarked, that the harbor of Newport was ever smooth, while any whaling vessels were in it; from which some oil might spread over the surface of the water. . . .

"Now I imagine that the wind, blowing over water thus covered with a film of oil, cannot easily catch upon it, so as to raise the firs and wrinkles, but slides over it, and leaves it as smooth as it finds it. It moves a little the oil, indeed which, being between it and the water, serves it to slide with, and prevents friction, as oil does between those parts of a machine that would otherwise rub hard together. Hence the oil dropped on the windward side of a pond proceeds gradually to leeward, as may be seen by the smoothness it carries with it, quite to the opposite side. For the wind, being thus prevented from raising the first wrinkles, that I call the elements of waves, cannot produce waves, which are to be made by continually acting up and enlarging those elements, and thus the whole pond is calmed."

He also wrote observations upon the sun's spots, volcanic eruptions, and "the prevailing doctrines of life and death." Speaking of the latter, he says that flies, drowned in a bottle of Madeira wine sent to him from Virginia, came to life when exposed to the sun.

"They commenced by some convulsive motions of the thighs, and at length they raised themselves upon their legs, wiped their eyes with their fore feet, beat and brushed their wings with their hind feet, and soon after began to fly, finding themselves in Old England without knowing how they came hither."

the serious consideration of the prudent and dispassionate, and not to enthusiasts and bigots, being convinced," he said, "in our own breasts that this shortened method . . . would further religion, remove animosity, and occasion a more frequent attendance on the worship of God."

But his theological experiments did not succeed so well as his philosophical discoveries and political measures.

During this year, he wrote two pieces adapted to the times, *Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One*, and *An Edict by the King of Prussia*. By a happy use of irony, he exposed, in the first, the measures pursued by the government toward the colonies, and in the latter, he specially held up to ridicule the ill-advised restrictions that had been put on American trade and manufactures. This piece was characterized by Lord Mansfield as "very able and very artful."

policy to be pursued by the Government. The whole trouble, said these partisans of the Crown, was caused by a few turbulent spirits. and a military force could easily produce the desired quiet. These letters having been placed in Dr. Franklin's hands, were transmitted by him to Thomas Cushing, Speaker of the House, and Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence in Massachusetts, that they might be shown to "some men of worth" in the province. A feeling of peculiar indignation was of course aroused, when it was found that the oppressions which the people had endured, were instigated or encouraged by Americans, their own neighbors. It was resolved, by a large majority of the House, to send a petition to the King for the removal of these obnoxious officials.

But in England "the ministry and the courtiers" were "highly enraged against" Dr. Franklin for transmitting the letters,. He was called an "incendiary," "and the papers were filled with invectives" against him. Hints were even given him, "that there were some thoughts of apprehending" him, and sending him to Newgate, and he was informed, that the Post-office was to be taken from him. The throwing overboard of the tea in Boston Harbor, in December, had "increased and strengthened the torrent of clamor" against him. On January 29th, 1774, he was summoned before the Privy Council, at



Whitehall, to be examined with reference to the petition from the Assembly. Public expectation was wonderfully roused. Thirty-five members of the Council were present, and besides, many distinguished persons, among them Burke, Dr. Priestly, and Jeremy Bentham, while the adjoining rooms were crowded by a multitude, who could only partially hear. Wedderburne, who was Solicitor General for the Crown, used the occasion to heap abuse upon Dr. Franklin and the colonies. "He must," says Lord Campbell, "be severely condemned for thus pandering to the low passions of his countrymen, instead of trying to enlighten them."

"The letters," said he, "could not have come to Dr. Franklin by fair means. . . . Nothing will acquit him of the charge of obtaining them by fraudulent or corrupt means, for the most malignant of purposes; unless he stole them from the person who stole them. This argument is irrefragable. I hope, my lords, you will mark and brand the man, for the honor of this country, of Europe, and of mankind. . . . He has forfeited all the respect of societies and of men. . . . Men will watch him with a jealous eye; they will hide their papers from him, and lock up there escritaires. He will henceforth esteem it a libel to be called a *man of letters*; *homo trlum literarum*." \*

All this bitter personal invective was uttered in the presence of Franklin, "who," says Dr. Bancroft, a friend of Franklin, "was dressed in a full dress suit of spotted Manchester velvet, and stood conspicuously erect, without the small-

\* That is, *swar*, or thief.

est movement of any part of his body," and with a "placid, tranquil expression of countenance," throughout the Solicitor's abusive speech.

"The favorite part of his discourse," says Franklin himself, in a letter to Mr. Cushing, "was levelled at your agent, who stood there the butt of his invective ribaldry for near an hour, not a single Lord adverting to the impropriety and indecency of treating a public messenger in so ignominious a manner, who was present only as the person delivering your petition, with the consideration of which no part of his conduct had any concern. If he had done a wrong in obtaining and transmitting the letters, that was not the tribunal where he was to be accused and tried. The cause was already before the Chancellor. Not one of their Lordships checked or recalled the orator to the business before them, but, on the contrary, a very few excepted, they seemed to enjoy highly the entertainment, and frequently burst out in loud applause."

As to the charge made against him, he further says:

"In truth I came by (the letters) honorably, and my intention in sending them was virtuous."

And of the rejection of the petition, he says:

"It has been a dangerous thing in any State to stop up the vent of griefs. Wise governments have therefore generally received petitions with some indulgence, even when but slightly founded. Those who think themselves injured by their rulers, are sometimes, by a mild and prudent answer, convinced of their error. But where complaining is a crime, hope becomes despair."

The British Government received the petition

him. She had been an affectionate and faithful wife, and deserves most honorable mention beside her more distinguished husband. But for her kind heart and helpful hand, and her intelligent interest in his affairs, especially in their humble days, he might not have become the far famed man that he did. She relieved him of many cares, and faithfully watched over the household during his long absences.

Had he known, during the last year of his stay in England, how feeble she really was, and how she pined to see him, it is certain that he would have allowed no public concerns to prevent an earlier return. But a fatal termination of her illness was not apprehended, and very likely the worst was not told him, as she was in constant hope, through many months, of his business abroad being settled. But it is pleasant to know that her children, Mr. and Mrs. Bache, tenderly cared for her.

Tidings having come, that it was proposed to hold a Continental Congress, "I venture," he says, "to stay in compliance with the wish of others, till the result of the Congress arrives, since they suppose my being here might on that occasion be of use." His heart was full of patriotic zeal, and in a letter to James Bowdoin, dated 23th February, 1775, he said:

"The eyes of all Christendom are now upon us, and our honor as a people is become a matter of the utmost conse-

quence to be taken care of. If we tamely give up our rights in this contest, a century to come will not restore us in the opinion of the world; we shall be stamped with the character of dastards, poltroons, and fools; and be despised and trampled upon, not by this haughty, insolent nation only, but by all mankind."

This letter mentions the fortunate arrival at this juncture, of Josiah Quincy Jr., one of the best patriots of that patriotic period. "It is a thousand pities," writes Franklin, "his strength of body is not equal to his strength of mind. His zeal for the public, like that of David for God's house, will, I fear, eat him up."

A new Parliament was to meet in November, when it was hoped by many that measures might be adopted to effect a reconciliation between the two countries. Lord Chatham was particularly severe upon the administration, and anxious to have all real causes of offence removed. He said so to Dr. Franklin, at the same time expressing his fears that the Americans were aiming at independence; which was doubtless true at that time. Franklin now quite despaired of any union that would be favorable to American interests.

"I cannot but apprehend," he had said, in February, of this year, "more mischief than benefit from a closer union. I fear they will drag us after them in all the plundering wars which their desperate circumstances, injustice and rapacity may prompt them to undertake; and their wide-wasting prodigality and profusion is a gulf that will swallow up every aid we may distress ourselves to afford them. . . . I apprehend, therefore, that to unite us into

mately will only be to corrupt and poison us also. However, I would try anything, and bear anything that can be borne with safety to our just liberties, rather than engage in a war with such relations, unless compelled to it by dire necessity in our own defence."

About a month before the session of Parliament, Dr. Franklin, being at the Royal Society, was told, by one of the members, that he had been requested by a certain lady to invite him to play chess with her, fancying that she could beat him. The lady was no less than a sister of Lord Howe, and her acquaintance would be eminently agreeable. The Doctor must not refuse the challenge. Of course so polite an invitation must be accepted. But the Doctor, "thinking it a little awkward," postponed calling from day to day, till nearly a month was gone, when, meeting the member again, he was reminded of his promise, and a day for calling was set. He went, and played a few games with the lady, who proved to be very sensible and agreeable, so that another appointment was made for a few days afterwards. The Doctor was completely deceived. He did not suspect the arts of the politician, under so innocent a guise. He made a second visit. After playing awhile, he and the lady fell into a little chat, first upon mathematics—for the lady was quite versed in that science,—and then about the new Parliament.

"And what," said she, "is to be done with this dispute between Great Britain and the colonies? I hope we are not to have a civil war." "They should kiss and be friends,"

replied the courteous American; "what can they do better? Quarrelling can be of service to neither, but is ruin to both." "I have often said," replied she, "that I wished government would employ you to settle the dispute for them; I am sure nobody would do it so well. Do not you think that the thing is practicable?" "Undoubtedly, madam, if the parties are disposed to reconciliation; for the two countries have really no clashing interests to differ about. It is rather a matter of punctilio, which two or three reasonable people might settle in half an hour. I thank you for the good opinion you are pleased to express of me; but the ministers will never think of employing me in that good work; they choose rather to abuse me." "Aye," said she, "they have behaved shamefully to you. And indeed some of them are now ashamed of it themselves."

Even this he looked upon as "accidental conversation," and "thought no more of it."

But some days after, "on Christmas evening, visiting Mrs. Howe, -he told me," says Franklin, "as soon as I went in, that her brother, Lord Howe, wished to be acquainted with me, that he was a very good man, and she was sure we should like each other. I said I had always heard a good character of Lord Howe, and should be proud of the honor of being known to him. 'He is but just by,' said she; 'will you give me leave to send for him?' 'By all means, madam, if you think proper.' She rang for a servant, wrote a note, and Lord Howe came in a few minutes."

And this was the game. Lord Howe secretly wished to be sent as Commissioner to America; and when, a little time after, Dr. Franklin met the former at his house, by appointment, Mrs. Howe, thinking the right time had come, said, "I wish, brother, you were to be sent thither

on such a service ; I should like that much better than General Howe's going to command the army there."

But all this fine contrivance accomplished nothing, for, in February, Parliament refused, two to one, to adopt Lord Chatham's plan of reconciliation, and Lord Howe could not bring Franklin to tone down his demands for America. Franklin was denounced, by Lord Sandwich, as "one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies this country had ever known." And though Lord Chatham replied, that the gentleman alluded to was "one whom all Europe held in high estimation for his knowledge and wisdom, and ranked with our Boyles and Newtons ; who was an honor, not to the English nation only, but to human nature," yet, for the present at least, negotiations were plainly at an end.

He sailed from England, March 21st, 1775, having been absent from America more than ten years. While on the voyage, he made an investigation of the Gulf Stream, the water of which he ascertained, by experiments with a thermometer, to be warmer than that on either side ; not knowing what was going on at Lexington and Concord. Had he heard those guns, which heralded the Revolution and Independence he too would have exclaimed with Samuel Adams, "Oh, what a glorious morning is this!"

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*At Home. — Elected Member of the Assembly. — Delegate to Congress. — Letter to Dr. Priestley. — Battle of Lexington. — Private Duties. — Letter to Mrs. Mecom. — Letter from Mrs. Mecom. — From Mrs. Greene. — Letter to Mrs. Hewson. — Busy Life. — Committee of Safety. — Draws up Plan of Confederation. — Indian Affairs. — Secret Committee. — Secret Correspondence. — Commissioner to Canada. — Postmaster General. — Confers with Washington at Cambridge. — Letter to Dr. Priestley. — Battle of Bunker Hill. — To a Friend in England. — Petition to the Crown. — Mr. Dickinson. — The Colonies Ripe for Independence. — Virginia Recommends Separation from England. — Mecklenburg County. — Declaration of Independence. — Thomas Jefferson. — John Adams. — Extracts from the Original Draft. — Story of John Thompson, the Hatter. — John Hancock. — Franklin's Wit. — "Hanging Together" and "Hanging Separately."*

AFTER a six weeks' passage, Dr. Franklin reached home "in the evening, and the next morning was unanimously chosen by the Assembly of Pennsylvania, a delegate to" the second



Continental "Congress," which had then been in session about nine days.

Writing to Dr. Priestley, about a fortnight after his arrival, he says :

"You will have heard before this reaches you, of a march stolen by the regulars into the country by night, and of their *expedition* back again. They retreated twenty miles in six hours. The governor had called the Assembly to propose Lord North's pacific plan, but, before the time of their meeting, began cutting of throats. You know it was said he carried the sword in one hand, and the olive branch in the other; and it seems he chose to give them a taste of the sword first. He is doubling his fortifications at Boston, and hopes to secure his troops till succor arrives. The place indeed is naturally so defensible, that I think them in no danger. All America is exasperated by his conduct, and more firmly united than ever. The breach between the two countries is grown wider, and in danger of becoming irreparable."

The press of public business which immediately awaited Franklin, did not make him forget his more private duties. He wrote to his sister, Mrs. Mecom, who, during the siege, had left her home, and was residing at Warwick, Rhode Island, with a friend of his, Mrs. Greene, wife of the Governor of Rhode Island, informing her of his safe arrival, and making particular inquiry how she had left her affairs in Boston, and whether he could render her any assistance. If not convenient for her to come to Philadelphia, he would, if she wished, endeavor to so arrange his business as to visit her.

Some weeks after, he received the following

letter from his sister, who was still at Warwick :

“I could have wished you had been left to your own option to have assisted in public affairs, so as not to fatigue you too much; but as your talents are superior to most other men’s, I can’t help requiring your country should enjoy the benefit of them while you live, but can’t bear the thought of your going to England again. . . . You positively must not go; you have served the public in that way beyond what any other man can boast till you are now come to a good old age, and some younger men must now take that painful service upon them. Don’t go, pray, don’t go; you certainly may do as much good here, as circumstances are at present.”

Another, from Mrs. Green, accompanied the above, in which, referring to Mrs. Mecom, she says :

“She was kind enough to show me her letter, and you are fearful she will be troublesome, but be assured that her company richly pays as she goes along, and we are very happy together, and shall not consent to spare her to anybody but her brother, were he to stay at home and be positive; but if you are to journey we must have her, for she is my mamma and friend, and I tell her that we are rich, that we have a lot here and another there, and have three or four of them, and we divert one another charmingly. Do come and see us, certain! Don’t think of going home (to England) again. Do sit down and enjoy the remainder of your days in peace. . . .

“Affectionate as long as life,

“CATY GREENE.”

Neither, amid his public and private cares at home, did he forget his friend in England, Mrs. Hewson. Writing to her, he says :

"It grieves me, that the present situation of public affairs makes it not eligible for you to come hither with your family, because I am sure you would otherwise like this country, and might provide better here for your children, at the same time that I should be made more happy by your neighborhood and company. I flatter myself that this may yet happen, and that our public disputes may be ended by the time your private business is settled to your mind, and then we may be all happy together. . . . .

"I take it kindly of my godson, that he should remember me; my love to him. I am glad to hear the dear children are all well through the measles. I have much delight in my godsons. Mr. and Mrs. Bache join in love to yours. Ben,\* when I delivered him your blessing, inquired the age of Elisabeth, and thought her yet too young for him; but, as he made no other objection, and that will lessen every day, I have only to wish being alive to dance with your mother at the wedding. Temple was much obliged by your kind remembrance of him. He is now very happy with his father (the governor) at Amboy, but returns to me in September, to prosecute his studies in our College.

"I am much pleased with the contribution letter, and thank you for your share of it. I am still well and hearty, and never went through more business than I do at present. God knows when I shall be permitted to enjoy the repose I wish. Adieu, my dear friend. Continue your pleasing correspondence, and believe me yours most affectionately."

Franklin was now sixty-nine years old, yet he had never labored with more ability; and so it would be for years to come. In strength and clearness of mind, power of endurance, and patriotic enthusiasm, he was fully the peer, in

\* Son of Mr. and Mrs. Bache; he was then probably about seven years old.

many cases, the superior, of eminent men much younger than himself. In fact, this was the brightest as well as most brilliant period of his life.

"In the morning at six," he wrote, "I am at the Committee of Safety, which Committee holds till near nine, when I am at Congress, and that sits till four in the afternoon." "Both these bodies proceed with the greatest unanimity."

The Committee referred to was appointed by the Assembly of Pennsylvania, for the defence of the province, and its duties involved a great deal of labor. In Congress, he took an active part in almost every important measure. He drew up a plan of Corporation for the Colonies; he was intrusted with the chief care of Indian affairs; he was member of a Secret Committee, to provide military supplies at home or from abroad; he bore the burden of the Committee of Secret Correspondence; and he was one of several commissioners who were sent to Canada, to endeavor to persuade that province to unite with the other colonies. He was appointed Postmaster General, and had the care of organizing that department for the whole country. He was also one of a Committee appointed by Congress to confer with Washington at the head-quarters at Cambridge, concerning the best mode of organizing an army. A part of the time, also, he was member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania.

Just before setting out for Cambridge, which

he did, October 4th, 1775, he wrote to his friend Dr. Priestley :

"Tall our good friend, Dr. Price, who sometimes has his doubts and despondencies about our firmness, that America is determined and unanimous; a very few Tories and placemen excepted, who will probably soon export themselves. Britain, at the expense of three millions, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign, which is twenty thousand pounds a head; and at Bunker's Hill she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by our taking post on Ploughed Hill \*. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America. From these *data* his mathematical head will easily calculate the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer our whole territory."

The same day, he wrote to another friend in England :

"We hear that more ships and troops are coming out. We know that you may do us a great deal of mischief, and are determined to bear it patiently as long as we can. But if you flatter yourselves with beating us into submission, you know neither the people nor the country. The Congress are still sitting, and will wait the result of the last petition."

This petition to the Crown had been reluctantly sent by this Congress, at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Jay, and others, but without any expectation on the part of Franklin and most of the members, that England would "have sense enough to embrace" the opportunity of reconciliation.

The country was now ripe for another and

\* In what is now Somerville.

bolder step. To Virginia is ascribed the honor of first proposing it, by her delegates in Congress, on the 7th of June; though the priority is claimed by North Carolina, in the action of the citizens of Mecklenberg County. It was, that the colonies should declare themselves free and independent states. Franklin was one of a committee of five appointed by Congress, to prepare a Declaration of Independence; "designed," says Jefferson, "to be an appeal to the tribunal of the world;" "an expression of the American mind," embodying "the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, etc." It was prepared by Thomas Jefferson, a few verbal amendments being made by Dr. Franklin and John Adams, and was signed on the evening of July 4th. It was not adopted, however, without a warm discussion of several days, much to the annoyance of its author.

"The pusillanimous idea," says Jefferson, "that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with, still haunted the minds of many. For this reason those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England, were struck out, lest they should give offence."

The following passage fell under this censure:

"At this very time, too, they [the people of England] are permitting their chief magistrates to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign merce-

naries to invade and destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and a great people together, but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness and glory is open to us too. We will tread it apart from them, and [acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our] eternal [separation].”

The following passage in the original draft was also stricken out, for fear of offending those in the northern colonies who profited by the slave-trade, and those extreme southern provinces which clung with peculiar tenacity to slavery :

“He [the King of England] has waged civil war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty, in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him; captivating, and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportations thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain : determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce; and, that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them, thus paying off former crimes, committed against the liber-

ties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another."

These censures of the English government and people, and these denunciations of slavery, were not objectionable to Franklin and Adams, and the other members of the committee.

Mr. Adams was the foremost defender of the document. Franklin, by way of comfort to Jefferson, who was "writhing a little under the acrimonious censure of one of its parts," told him the story of John Thompson, the hatter :

"I have made it a rule," said he, "whenever in my power to avoid becoming the draftsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident, which I will relate to you. When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprentice hatter, having served out his time, was about to open a shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome sign board, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words, *John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells Hats for ready money*, with a figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to, thought the word *hatter* tautologous, because followed by the words *makes hats*, which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed, that the word *makes* might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats; if good and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words *for ready money* were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. Every one who purchased, expected to pay. They were parted with; and the inscription now stood, '*John Thompson sells hats.*' '*Sells hats?*' says his next friend;



'why, nobody will expect you to give them away. What then is the use of that word?' It was stricken out, and *hats* followed, the rather, as there was one painted on the board. So his inscription was reduced ultimately to *John Thompson*, with the figure of a hat subjoined."

Franklin's ready wit came out when the members were about signing the Declaration.

"We must be unanimous," said John Hancock; "there must be no pulling different ways; we must all hang together." "Yes," replied Franklin, "we must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

*Great Britain Tries Further Negotiation.— Lord Howe as a Commissioner to Treat with the Colonies.— Franklin one of a Committee of Conference.— John Adams' Account of the First Night on the Way to New York.— Scene in the Tavern.— Fresh Air.— Interview with Lord Howe.— Monument to his Brother.— Franklin's Reply to Howe.— No Result.— Seeking an Alliance with France.— Appointment of Dr. Franklin as Ambassador.— Leaves America.— His Two Grandsons.— At Passy.— Effect of his Arrival.— The English Ambassador.— How Franklin was Received.— Jefferson's Account.— Playing Chess with the Duchess of Bourbon.— Letter to Mrs. Hewson.— Describes his own Appearance.— Letter to Another Lady.— Madame Campan's Account.— Letter from Franklin.— French Ladies.— Letter from Mrs. Mecom.— Lord Brougham.— Visited by Eminent Persons.— Buffon.— Voltaire.— An Annoyance.— Letter of Recommendation.— A Model Letter.— Lafayette.— New Efforts at Reconciliation.— Edmund Burke.— Philadelphia and General Howe.— Letter from Mrs. Bache.— Treaties of Alliance and Commerce.— Independence Recognized.— Introduced to the King.— Popular Demonstrations,*

NOTWITHSTANDING the declaration of independence by the Continental Congress, and the vigorous prosecution of hostile operations by both parties, the British Government, fearing doubtless whereunto these things would grow, if not speedily counteracted, resolved to try what virtue there might be in further negotiation. The famous game of chess into which Franklin, when in England, had been enticed by an excellent but artful lady, had been so far successfully played, as that her brother, Lord Howe, had become commissioner from the crown to treat with the colonies. And, singularly enough, Franklin was one of a committee of three appointed by Congress to meet him, and hear what proposals he had to offer. The interview took place on Staten Island, September 11th. John Adams, who was one of the committee, tells us how they spent their first night on the way, at New Brunswick:

“The taverns were so full we could with difficulty obtain entertainment. . . . But one bed could be procured for Dr. Franklin and me, in a chamber little longer than the bed, without a chimney, and with only one small window. The window was open, and I, who was an invalid and afraid of the air in the night, shut it close. ‘Oh,’ says Franklin, ‘don’t shut the window, we shall be suffocated.’ I answered, I was afraid of the evening air. Dr. Franklin replied, ‘The air within this chamber will soon be, and indeed is now, worse than without doors. Come, open the window, and come to bed, and I will convince you. I believe you are not acquainted with my theory of colds.’ Opening the window, and leaping into bed, I said I had

read his letters to Dr. Cooper, in which he had advanced that nobody had ever got cold by going into a cold church or any other cold air, but the theory was so little consistent with my experience that I thought it a paradox. However, I had so much curiosity to hear his reasons, that I would run the risk of a cold. The doctor then began a harangue upon air and cold, and respiration and perspiration, with which I was so much amused that I soon fell asleep, and left him and his philosophy together, but I believe they were equally sound and insensible within a few minutes after me, for the last words I heard were pronounced as if he was more than half asleep. I remember little of the lecture, except that the human body by respiration and perspiration destroys a gallon of air a minute; that two such persons as were now in that chamber would consume all the air in it in an hour or two; that by breathing over again the air thrown off by the lungs and the skin, we should imbibe the real cause of colds, not from abroad, but from within, etc."

At the interview, continues Mr. Adams,

"Lord Howe was profuse in his expressions of gratitude to the State of Massachusetts for erecting a marble monument, in Westminster Abbey, to his elder brother, Lord Howe, who was killed in America in the last French war, saying, 'he esteemed that honor to his family *above all things in this world*. That such was his gratitude and affection to the country on that account that he felt for America as for a brother, and if America should fall, he should feel and lament it like the loss of a brother.' Dr. Franklin, with an easy air and a collected countenance, a bow, a smile, and all that *naïveté* which sometimes appeared in his conversation, and is often observed in his writings, replied: 'My Lord, we will do our utmost endeavors to spare your lordship that mortification.' His lordship appeared to feel this

with more sensibility than I could expect; but he only returned, 'I suppose you will endeavor to give us employment in Europe.' "

It turned out that the royal commissioner, though exceedingly polite, would not recognize them, nor indeed General Washington or the Congress, in their official capacity, and that all he had to offer was pardon with submission. Thus forever ended the game.

The colonies had taken their stand as an independent nation, but they still had to defend their claim against a powerful foe. Help was needed, and an alliance was now sought with France, long a bitter enemy, but now disposed to be friendly. Who shall be sent on so delicate an embassy? Franklin, though now seventy years of age, was the first and unanimous choice of Congress, as of the country. With him were associated Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, who were then abroad, but Franklin was the soul of the commission.

He left Philadelphia on the 26th of October, 1776, accompanied by two of his grandsons, William Temple Franklin and Benjamin Franklin Bache, the one seventeen and the other seven. After a rough passage of thirty days, which somewhat "weakened" him, they reached France. He hired a "fine" house at Passy, a pleasant village a little out of Paris, where he enjoyed the pleasure of a "large garden to walk in."

He had come unheralded and apparently as a

private citizen, his appointment by Congress being a profound secret, but his arrival was soon known throughout Europe, and awakened universal interest. The English ambassador threatened to leave France if this rebel agent was received by the French court, but he was pacified with the reply, that not much harm could be expected from an old man of nearly eighty. "Extreme civilities" were extended to the distinguished stranger by "numbers of the principal people." Writing afterwards to a friend he says :

"If being treated with all the politeness of France, and the apparent respect and esteem of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, can make a man happy, I ought to be so."

A French historian \* of the period says of him :

"By the effect which Franklin produced in France, one might say he fulfilled his mission, not with a court, but with a free people. Diplomatic etiquette did not permit him often to hold interviews with the ministers, but he associated with all the distinguished personages who directed public opinion. Men imagined they saw in him a sage of antiquity, come back to give austere lessons and generous examples to the moderns. They personified in him the republic, of which he was the representative and the legislator. They regarded his virtues as those of his countrymen, and even judged of their physiognomy by the imposing and serene traits of his own. Happy was he who could gain admittance to see him in the house which he occupied at Passy. This venerable old man, it was said, joined to the demeanor of Phocion the spirit of Socrates. Courtiers were struck with

\* See Sparks, *Life and Writings of Franklin*, I., 420.

his native dignity, and discovered in him the profound statesman. Young officers, impatient to signalize themselves in another hemisphere, came to interrogate him respecting the military condition of the Americans; when he spoke to them with deep concern and a manly frankness of the recent defeats, which had put his country in jeopardy, this only excited in them a more ardent desire to join and assist the republican soldiers. . . . His virtues and his renown negotiated for him; and, before the second year of his mission had expired, no one conceived it possible to refuse fleets and an army to the compatriots of Franklin."

"When Dr. Franklin went to France," says Jefferson, "on his revolutionary mission, his eminence as a philosopher, his venerable appearance, and the cause on which he was sent, rendered him extremely popular. For all ranks and conditions of men there entered warmly into the American interests. He was, therefore, feasted and invited to all the court parties. At these he sometimes met the old Duchess of Bourbon, who being a chess-player of about his force, they very generally played together. Happening once to put her king into prize, the Doctor took it. 'Ah,' says she, 'we do not take kings so.' 'We do in America,' said the Doctor."

He thus described his own appearance, in letters to friends :

"Figure to yourself," he wrote to Mrs. Hewson, "an old man with gray hair appearing under a martin fur cap, among the powdered heads of Paris. It is this odd figure that salutes you, with handfulls of blessings on you and your dear little ones,"

"I know you wish you could see me," he wrote to another lady in England; "but as you cannot, I will describe myself

to you. Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few years older; very plainly dressed, wearing my thin gray straight hair, that peeps out under my only *coiffure*, a fine fur cap, which comes down my forehead almost to my spectacles. Think how this must appear among the powdered heads of Paris! I wish every lady and gentleman in France would only be so obliging as to follow my fashion, comb their own heads as I do mine, dismiss their *friseurs*, and pay me half the money they paid to them. You see, the gentry might well afford this, and I could then enlist these *friseurs*, who are at least one hundred thousand, and with the money I would maintain them, make a visit with them to England, and dress the heads of your ministers and privy counsellors; which I conceive at present to be *un peu dérangées*."

"When Franklin appeared at court," says Madame Campan,\* it was "in the costume of an American planter; his hair plainly brushed, without powder. His round hat and plain coat of brown cloth contrasted strongly with the powdered *coiffures* and the bespangled and embroidered coats of the perfumed courtiers of Versailles. His simple and novel yet dignified appearance charmed the ladies of the court, and many were the *fêtes* given him, not only for his fame as a philosopher, but in acknowledgment of his patriotic virtues, which led him to enroll himself among the noble supporters of the cause of liberty. I assisted at one of these entertainments, where the most beautiful from among three hundred ladies was designated to place a crown of laurel on the gray head, and salute with a kiss each cheek of the American philosopher."

The tidings of these attentions found their way to America. Alluding to them, he wrote some time after, to an American friend :



"The account you have had of the vogue I am in here has some truth in it. Perhaps few strangers in France have had the good fortune to be so universally popular; but the story you allude to, mentioning 'mechanic rust,' is totally without foundation. But one is not to expect being always in fashion. I hope, however, to preserve, while I stay, the regard of the French ladies; for their society and conversation, when I have time to enjoy them, are extremely agreeable."

His good sister Mecom could not restrain the expression of her delight at the honors heaped upon him.

"Bless God," she wrote, "I now and then hear of your health and glorious achievements in the political way, as well as in the favor of the ladies, (since you have rubbed off the mechanic rust, and commenced complete courtier) who claim from you the tribute of an embrace, and it seems you do not complain of the tax as a very great penance."

But he was not spoiled by these praises and caresses.

"No patrician," says Lord Brougham, "born to shine in courts, or assist at the councils of monarchs, ever bore his honors in a lofty station more easily, or was less spoilt by the enjoyment of them than this common workman did when negotiating with royal representatives, or caressed by all the beauty and fashion of the most brilliant court in Europe."

Persons eminent in literature and science were attracted to Franklin. Buffon, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Raynal, and many other celebrated men courted his society. When Voltaire, near the end of his life, came to Paris, where he received the caresses and adulations of the people, he sought an interview with the American philosopher.

But his popularity had its drawbacks. He was beset by crowds of applicants for letters of recommendation to Washington and other leading men in America. Young officers wanted positions in the new army, most of whom he found it necessary to refuse.

"These applications," he says, "are my perpetual torment. . . . Not a day passes in which I have not a number of soliciting visits, besides letters. . . . You can have no conception how I am harassed. All my old friends are sought out, and teased to tease me. Great officers of all ranks, in all departments; ladies, great and small, besides professed solicitors, worry me from morning till night. The noise of every coach now that enters my court terrifies me. I am afraid to accept an invitation to dine abroad, being almost sure of meeting with some officer or officer's friend, who, as soon as I am put in good humor by a glass or two of champagne, begins his attack upon me."

At last, indignant, he drew up a model of a letter of recommendation, which his grandson, William Temple Franklin, says he actually employed in some instances:

"SIR: The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a letter of recommendation, though I know nothing of him, not even his name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here. Sometimes, indeed, one unknown person brings another equally unknown, to recommend him; and sometimes they recommend one another! As to this gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his character and merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I can possibly be. I recommend him, however, to those civilities which every stranger, of whom one knows no harm, has a right to; and I request

you will do him all the good offices, and show him all the favor that, on further acquaintance, you should find him to deserve. I have the honor to be, etc."

Of course, there were honorable exceptions, where a letter to Congress was most cordially given, like the following:

"The Marquis de Lafayette, a young nobleman of great family connections here, and great wealth, is gone to America in a ship of his own, accompanied by some officers of distinction, in order to serve in our armies. He is exceedingly beloved, and everybody's good wishes attend him."

"He has left a beautiful young wife, and, for her sake particularly, we hope that his bravery and ardent desire to distinguish himself will be a little restrained by the general's prudence, so as not to permit his being hazarded much, except on some important occasion."

During the campaign of 1776, the Americans sustained discouraging defeats, which indisposed the French government to take any steps towards an open alliance with the new nation. This was thought a favorable opportunity for England to urge anew the question of reconciliation on the basis of submission to the crown. Edmund Burke, in a letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, January, 1777, said:

"He believed Dr. Franklin had come to France, for the purpose of effecting such a negotiation in case that nation declined its aid."

"This I take to be his errand; for I never can believe that he has come hither as a fugitive from his cause in the hour of its distress, or that he is going to conclude a long life, which has brightened every hour it has continued, with so foul and dishonorable a flight."

No, surely; nor by "foul and dishonorable" submission to England. He was waiting in anxious, but certain expectation of better tidings from home. That very year General Burgoyne was captured, and other successes followed. Philadelphia, indeed, fell into the hands of the British, but that did not dishearten Franklin. "General Howe has taken Philadelphia," some one said to him. "You are mistaken," he replied; "Philadelphia has taken General Howe;" which proved true, for his troops were virtually imprisoned there for eight months, and then escaped by a precipitate retreat. Franklin's son-in-law, Mr. Bache, having returned to the city, after this event, wrote:

"I found your house and furniture in much better order than I had reason to expect. They carried off some of your musical instruments, a Welsh harp, a bell harp, the set of tuned bells, which were in a box, a *viola a gamba*, all the spare Armonica glasses, and one or two of the spare cases. Your Armonica is safe. They took, likewise, the few books that were left behind. Some of your electrical apparatus is also missing. A Captain Andre took with him the picture of you, which hung in the dining-room. The rest of the pictures are safe."

Franklin seized the favorable opportunity to urge upon the French government an open espousal of the American cause. On the 6th of February, 1778, two treaties of alliance and commerce were concluded, and the United States were recognized as an independent nation. Franklin and his brother commissioners

were formally introduced to the king. But Franklin was the centre of attraction.

“He was accompanied and followed,” says a French historian, “by a great number of Americans, and individuals from various countries, whom curiosity had drawn together. His age, his venerable aspect, the simplicity of his dress, everything fortunate and remarkable in the life of this American, contributed to excite public attention. The clapping of hands, and other expressions of joy, indicated that warmth of enthusiasm which the French are more susceptible of than other people. . . . After this audience, he crossed the court on his way to the office of the minister of foreign affairs. The multitude waited for him in the passage, and greeted him with their acclamations. He met with a similar reception, wherever he appeared in Paris.”\*

\* Sparks, I., 435.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

*France Prepares for War. — Another Trial to effect American Submission. — David Hartley. — Bribes. — Franklin's Official Associates. — Deane. — Lee. — Adams. — Franklin Chosen Minister Plenipotentiary. — Adams Returns to America. — Family Correspondence. — Letter from Mrs. Mecom. — John Hancock. — State of Affairs in New England. — Letter from Mrs. Bache. — A Granddaughter. — Prices in Philadelphia. — Letter from Mrs. Partridge. — His Picture. — Letter from Mrs. Bache. — Cost of Gloves. — Cost of Living. — The French Minister. — General and Mrs. Washington. — Anecdote of Little Ben. — Prayer to Hercules. — Franklin's Reply. — Medallions of Franklin. — His Popularity in France. — Spinning. — Reproves his Daughter. — Plan for Removing Temple Franklin from his Office. — Franklin's Enemies. — Letter from Franklin. — His Grandson. — Ben. Bache. — Hercules. — Black Pins and Feathers. — Lecture on Economy. — Message to General Washington. — Letter to John Jay. — Luxury. — His Daughter's Reply. — Defends herself from the Charge of Extravagance. — Depreciated Currency. — Letter from Mrs. Mecom. — Another Letter.*

— *Crown Soap.* — *Captain Cook.* — *Moravian Missionaries.* — *Philosophical Researches.* — *Aurora Borealis.*

THE recognition of American independence by France, was, of course, a declaration of war against England, and preparations for hostilities were immediately made by the Court of Versailles. Even this, however, did not deter the English government from an attempt to tamper with the American commissioners. They were approached by various persons, some of them the sincere friends of peace, others the mere instruments of British arrogance, to ascertain whether they might not be brought over to the side of England. David Hartley significantly advised Franklin to "take care of his own safety." Another agent of the government, under an assumed name, tried the effect of promises of "places, pensions and peerages." Franklin saw that here was an attempt at corruption, and he replied with honest indignation. John Adams, now Commissioner in the place of Silas Deane, who had been recalled, showed that he was possessed of the same stern integrity with his colleague. They became "convinced" that these singular endeavors to corrupt them, or win them over to peace with England, were really the consequence of her own alarm. Both parties in England were "perplexed with the present situation of affairs, and knew not which way to turn themselves, or whether it were best to go backward or forward, or what steps to take to

extricate the nation from its present dangerous situation."

Franklin was unfortunate in the persons with whom he was associated in the commission to France. The course pursued by Deane produced great dissatisfaction at home ; and that he was not a true patriot is proved by his afterwards associating himself with "his friend," Arnold the traitor. Lee was of a jealous disposition ; he quarreled with Deane, and sought to destroy Franklin's influence. John Adams was an ardent and upright patriot, but he was impulsive, and did not wholly approve of the methods pursued by his venerable colleague. It was a happy agreement among the several representatives of America, when they united in advising Congress to appoint a minister plenipotentiary in place of the triple commission. Franklin was chosen to that high office ; Adams gracefully acquiesced in the appointment, and soon returned to America, Lee being continued as envoy to Spain. The new minister delivered his credentials into "his Majesty's own hands, who, in the most gracious manner, expressed his satisfaction." This was in the summer of 1779

While Franklin was engaged in the arduous duty of providing money and other substantial aid for his country during the war of independence, he kept up a family correspondence, which brings out interesting traits of his character, and the spirit of the times. We learn, also, the extreme depreciation of the currency.



Mrs. Mecom, writing from Warwick, August 15, 1778, informs him that

“Mr. Hancock heads an independent company from Boston, of which it is said there is not a man among them worth less than ten thousand pounds sterling.”

She also tells him that

“They asked her six dollars for a pair of shoes, such as she used to buy for half a dollar a pair by the dozen in Boston. I have lived,” she adds, “in constant jeopardy since the spring, when my children removed from Coventry to this place, where we are much exposed, and have been under constant apprehension.”

“His daughter, Mrs. Bache, writes from Philadelphia, October 22, of the same year, to her “Dear and Honored Sir,” that they had been compelled to flee from the city, four days after the birth of her little girl —

“A fine brown lass; but her sparkling black eyes make up for her skin, and when in health she has a good color. I would give a good deal if you could see her; you can’t think how fond of kissing she is, and gives such old-fashioned smacks, General Arnold [!] says he would give a good deal to have her for a school-mistress to teach the young ladies how to kiss.

“I should tell you,” she adds, “that I had seven tablecloths of my own spinning. . . . I find them very useful, and they look very well.”

What follows shows the dire extremity to which the ladies at that time were reduced :

“They ask me six dollars for a pair of gloves, and I have been obliged to pay fifteen pounds fifteen shillings for a com-

mon calamanco petticoat without quilting, that I once could have got for fifteen shillings. I buy nothing but what I really want, and wore out my silk ones before I got this. I do not mention these things by way of complaint; . . . I find I can go without many things I once thought absolutely necessary."

She then tells him — good patriot that she is — that Mr. Bache would not allow their little son Ben to go to the Academy (in the city), because the trustees were almost all tories, but had sent him to a German school, in Lancaster County, where he had learned to speak German.

Mrs. Partridge, step-daughter of Franklin's brother John, writing from Boston, two days later, pours out her heart as follows:

"HON'D AND EVER DEAR PAPA:

"I love, I almost adore the French ladies for their kindness to you; but let me entreat you, my dear papa, not to let that influence you to stay one day longer in France than the service of your country requires; believe me, there are hundreds here as agreeable, that are impatient to render you every service. I have one very amiable girl that, with her mamma, longs to see and converse with you."

She closes, with begging him to send her his picture or miniature, to wear on her neck.

In due time came the "resemblance," which, in her letter of acknowledgment, she wishes had been "colored, as the paleness of the countenance gave her melancholy ideas. But," she adds,

"I pressed the dear image close up to my face,  
And wished the original were in its place."

She then informs him that one of her brothers is "on the verge of matrimony, with a very agreeable widow," and that another lives single yet, and she fears will "die the half of the scissors."

The following letter from Mrs. Bache, written from Philadelphia, Jan. 17th, 1779, reveals the affectionate and grateful daughter, and shows that her father was not insensible to her touching allusion to the high cost of gloves. After acknowledging the receipt of "six pairs of gloves, nine papers of needles, a bundle of thread, and five papers of pins," she says she suspects, as the bundle came opened, that something had been taken out, but she adds: "But what I have received makes me rich." "It takes a fortune," she further says, "to feed a family in a very plain way." She informs him that a pair of gloves costs seven dollars, one yard of common gauze twenty-four dollars; and yet, she adds:

"There never was so much dressing and pleasure going on; old friends meeting again, the Whigs in high spirits, and strangers of distinction among us. . . . The [French] minister was kind enough to offer me some fine white flannel, and has spared me eight yards."

This was because she was Franklin's daughter. She proudly adds:

"I shall have great pride in wearing anything you send, and showing it as my father's taste. I have dined at the minister's, . . . and have lately been several times invited abroad with the General and Mrs. Washington. He

always inquires after you in the most affectionate manner, and speaks of you highly. We dined at Mrs. Powell's your birthday, or night, I should say, in company together, and he told me it was the anniversary of his marriage; it was just twenty years that night.

"My boy and girl are in health; the latter has ten teeth, can dance, sing, and make faces, though she cannot talk, except the words *no* and *be done*, which she makes great use of. She is Ben over again, except a larger mouth. How happy I should be to see her seated on your knee! She is just such a plaything as Will was when you came home last. I must tell you a little anecdote of him, and ask you if it is not time to teach him a little religion. He had heard a foolish girl that lived with me say there was a death-watch in the room, and one of the family would soon die. He had not been long in bed before he came down in his shirt, screaming. I soon sent him up, and, asking him in the morning how he could behave so, and what was the matter, he told me he thought death was coming. 'I was so frightened,' says he, 'that I sweat all over, and I jumped out of bed and prayed up to Hercules.' I asked him what he said. Down he went on his knees, with uplifted hands (think I never saw such a picture of desolation), and repeated the Lord's prayer. Now, whether it is best to instruct him in a little religion, or let him pray a little longer to Hercules, I should be glad to have your opinion.

. . . . "I have a piece of American silk, which I shall send to you for the Queen. It will make me happy if she condescends to wear it."

To this, her father replied, June 3d:

"The clay medallion of me you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France. A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in the lids of snuff-boxes, and some so small as to be

worn in rings; and the numbers sold are incredible. These, with the pictures, busts and prints (of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere), have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do anything that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it. It is said by learned etymologists, that the name *doll*, for the images children play with, is derived from the word IDOL. From the number of *dolls* now made of him, he may be truly said, *in that sense*, to be *i-doll-ized* in this country.

"I think you did right to stay out of town till the summer was over, for the sake of your child's health. I hope you will get out again this summer during the hot months; for I begin to love the dear little creature from your description of her.

"I was charmed with the account you gave me of your own spinning, etc.; but the latter part of the paragraph, that you had sent for linen from France because weaving and flax were grown dear, alas! that dissolved the charm; and your sending for long black pins, and lace, and *feathers*, disgusted me as much as if you had put salt into my strawberries. The spinning, I see, is laid aside, and you are to be dressed for the ball! You seem not to know, my dear daughter, that, of all things in the world, idleness is the dearest, except mischief.

"The project you mention, of removing Temple from me, was an unkind one. To deprive an old man, sent to serve his country in a foreign one, of the comfort of a child to attend him, to assist him in health, and take care of him in sickness, would be cruel, if it was practicable. In this case it could not be done; for, as the pretended suspicions of him are groundless, and his behavior in every respect unexceptionable, I should not part with the child, but with the employment. But I am confident that, whatever may be pro-

posed by weak or malicious people, the Congress is too wise and too good to think of treating me in that manner."

It appears from a letter written the day before to Mr. Bache, that "a cabal" had been formed by enemies at home, for removing his grandson, William Temple Franklin, from his office of secretary, on the ground that he was the son of a tory father; for William Franklin, the governor, had gone over to the English, and was the enemy of American independence. This was no fault of Doctor Franklin, and no reason why the sin of the son should be visited upon the father and the grandson. But malicious partisans laid hold of it to Franklin's injury. When informed of it, he said, in the letter just referred to:

"I am surprised to hear that my grandson, Temple Franklin, being with me, should be an objection against me. . . . Methinks it is rather some merit, that I have rescued a valuable young man from the danger of being a Tory, and fixed him in honest, republican, Whig principles; as I think, from the integrity of his disposition, his industry, his early sagacity, and uncommon abilities for business, he may in time become of great service to his country. It is enough that I have lost my *son*; would they add my *grandson*? An old man of seventy, I undertook a winter voyage at the command of the Congress and in the public service, with no other attendant to take care of me. I am continued here in a foreign country, where, if I am sick, his filial attention comforts me, and, if I die, I have a child to close my eyes, and take care of my remains. His dutiful behavior towards me, and his diligence and fidelity in business, are both pleasing and useful to me. His conduct, as my private secretary, has been unexceptionable, and I am confident the Congress

will never think of separating us. I have had a great deal of pleasure in Ben,\* too. He is a good, honest lad, and will make, I think, a valuable man."

To return to the letter to Mrs. Bache:

"Ben\*, if I should live long enough to want it, is like to be another comfort to me. As I intend him for a Presbyterian as well as a Republican, I have sent him to finish his education at Geneva. He is much grown, in very good health, draws a little, as you will see by the enclosed, learns Latin, writing, arithmetic, and dancing, and speaks French better than English. . . . He has not been long from me. I send the accounts I have of him, and I shall put him in mind of writing to you. I cannot propose to you to part with your own dear Will†. I must one of these days go back to see him; happy to be once more all together! but futurities are uncertain. Teach him, however, in the mean time, to direct his worship more properly, for the deity of Hercules is now quite out of fashion. . . .

"When I began to read your account of the high prices of goods, 'a pair of gloves seven dollars, a yard of common gauze twenty-four dollars, and that it now required a fortune to maintain a family in a very plain way,' I expected you would conclude with telling me that every lady as well as yourself was grown frugal and industrious; and I could scarce believe my eyes in reading forward, that 'there never was so much pleasure and dressing going on;' and that you yourself wanted black pins and feathers from France to appear, I suppose, in the mode! This leads me to imagine that perhaps it is not so much that the goods are grown dear, as that the money has grown cheap, as everything else will do when excessively plenty; and that people are still as easy nearly in their circumstances, as when a pair of gloves

\* Mr. Bache's oldest son.

† A younger son of Mr. Bache.

might be had for half a crown. The war may indeed in some degree raise the prices of goods, and the high taxes which are necessary to support the war may make our frugality necessary; and, as I am always preaching that doctrine, I cannot in conscience or in decency encourage the contrary, by my example, by furnishing my children with foolish modes and luxuries. I therefore send all the articles you desire, that are useful and necessary, and omit the rest; for, as you say you should 'have great pride in wearing anything I send, and showing it as your father's taste,' I must avoid giving you an opportunity of doing that with either lace or feathers. If you wear your cambric ruffles as I do, and take care not to mend the holes, they will come in time to be lace; and feathers, my dear girl, may be had in America from every cock's tail.

"If you happen again to see General Washington, assure him of my very great and sincere respect, and tell him, that all the old generals here amuse themselves in studying the accounts of his operations, and approve highly of his conduct.

"Present my affectionate regards to all friends that inquire after me, . . . and write oftener, my dear child, to your loving father."

If there is seemingly undue severity in this letter, an excuse may perhaps be found in what he wrote to John Jay that same year :

"The extravagant luxury of our country, in the midst of all its distresses, is to me amazing. When the difficulties are so great to find remittances to pay for the arms and ammunition necessary for our defence, I am astonished and vexed to find upon inquiry, that much the greatest part of the Congress interest bills came to pay for tea, and a great part of the remainder is ordered to be laid out in gewgaws and superfluities."



The daughter replied in September following. After telling her father that she had sent a box of squirrel skins to Temple, and a piece of homespun silk, which she had long wished to send him for the Queen, "whose character," she says, "I admire," she comes to the charge of extravagance brought against her; and here she shows herself as skilful a diplomatist in her line as her father did in his:

"How could my dear papa," she asks with charming innocence, "give me so severe a reprimand for wishing a little finery? he would not, I am sure, if he knew how much I have felt it. Last winter was a season of triumph to the Whigs, and they spent it gaily; you would not have had me, I am sure, stay away from the Ambassador's or Gerards's entertainments, nor when I was invited to spend the day with General Washington and his lady, and you would have been the last person, I am sure, to have wished to see me dressed with singularity; though I never loved dress so much as to wish to be particularly fine, yet I never will go out when I cannot appear so as to do credit to my family and husband. . . . I can assure my dear papa, that industry in this house is by no means laid aside; but as to spinning linen, we cannot think of that till we have got that wove which we spun three years ago."

She tells him she had tried three weavers in vain; that a friend had bribed a weaver living on his farm to weave her eighteen yards, keeping it a secret from the country people, who would not suffer them to weave for those in town; and that no weaving is done but for hard money.

"My maid," she adds, "is now spinning wool for winter stockings for the whole family, which will be no difficulty

in the manufacturing, as I knit them myself. I only mention these things that you may see that the balls are not the only reason that the wheel is laid aside. I did not mention the feathers and pins as necessities of life, as my papa seems to think. I meant that as common necessities were so dear, I could not afford to get anything that was not, and begged he would send me a few of the others; nor should I have had such wishes, but being in constant hope that things would soon return to their former channel. I kept up my spirits, and wished to mix with the world; but that hope with me is now entirely over, and this winter approaches with so many horrors, that I shall not want anything to go abroad in, if I can be comfortable at home. My spirits, which I have kept up during my being drove about from place to place, much better than most people's I have met with, have been lowered by nothing but the depreciation of the money, which has been amazing lately, so that home will be the place for me this winter, as I cannot get a common winter cloak and hat, but just decent, under two hundred pounds: as to gauze, now it is fifty dollars a yard, 'tis beyond my wish, and I should think it not only a shame but a sin to buy it, if I had millions. I should be contented with muslin caps if I could procure them in the winter,—in the summer I went without; as to cambric I have none to make lace of."

We have no record of any reply to this ingenious and pathetic defence, but we are quite sure it must have brought the father to terms, and secured the remittance of the pins and feathers.

Amidst the cares of office and the "cabals" of malicious partisans, it must have been a great comfort to receive such a letter as the following, from his sister, Mrs. Mecom, dated Warwick, February 14, 1779:

**"MY DEAR, DEAR BROTHER. . . .**

"Myself and children have always been a heavy tax upon you, but your great and uncommon goodness has carried you cheerfully on under it, and we have all along enjoyed many of the comforts of life through your bounty we must otherwise have done without." And she touchingly adds: "It has pleased God to diminish us fast and thereby your expenses and care of us. . . . It has now pleased God to take poor Peter. His mouth was opened just before his death to commend himself to the mercy of God, and with a blessing on those about him, he sunk into eternity without a groan. . . ."

"I do not take pleasure in giving you an uneasy thought, but it gives some relief to unbosom one's self to a dear friend, as you have been to me. Father, husband, brother, and children, may I not live to be deprived of all in you, but you live to see the happiness of your children's children confirmed, and a happy peace in America, prays

**"YOUR AFFECTIONATE SISTER."**

Another letter and almost the last one we have from her, breathes a spirit of most sisterly affection, and proves how sincere and abiding was his affection for her:

**"DEAR BROTHER:**

"I have after a long year received your kind letter of Nov. 26th, 1778, wherein you, like yourself, do all for me that the most affectionate brother can be desired or expected to do, and though I feel myself full of gratitude for your generosity, the conclusion of your letter affects me more, where you say you wish we may spend our last days together. O my dear brother, if this could be accomplished, it would give me more joy than anything on this side Heaven could possibly do."

She then speaks of "the awe of his superiority preventing the familiarity she might have taken with him," but thinks she could now take more freedom. She hopes soon to send him "some crown soap," as soon as some "new wax comes in, after the frost." Unfortunately she has "no instruments to stamp the soap," which she hopes will not "depreciate its value."

From such private concerns, he turned to do a generous deed in the interests of science. The war was going on with England, but Captain Cook, the great navigator and discoverer, being now on his return home, Franklin directed the American cruisers, should they fall in with him, to "treat the captain and his people with civility and kindness, affording them, as common friends of mankind, all the assistance in their power." Which act was gracefully acknowledged by the King, in a letter written at his instance, and by the Royal Society, by the presentation of a gold medal.

He also granted, every year during the war, a passport to the Moravian vessel which carried supplies from London to the missionaries at Labrador; and also to a vessel sent out from Dublin to the West Indies, with provisions and clothing for sufferers there.

During the year, he also devoted some time to philosophical researches. He prepared a paper for the Royal Academy of Science at Paris, on the Aurora Borealis, which he ascribed to the effect of electricity.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

*Letter to Washington. — The Future of America. — Alliance of Neutral Powers. — Privateering. — Letter to Edmund Burke. — On War. — Anxious to return Home. — Enemies. — Letter to John Adams. — Cornwallis' Surrender. — Treaty of Paris. — Letter to Sir Joseph Banks. — Letter from his Grandson. — From Mrs. Mecom. — Letter to Thomas Brand Hollis. — Thomas Hollis. — Doing Good as a Business. — "Gentlemen." — Animal Magnetism. — The American Eagle. — The Turkey. — Letter to Henry Lawrence. — Anticipates Death. — Calumnies. — General and Particular Infallibility. — Saying of a French Lady. — Letter to Mrs. Hewson. — His Infirmities. — Letter from Mrs. Mecom. — His Son. — Letter to his Son. — Treaty between Prussia and the United States. — Washington's Opinion. — Town Library in Franklin, Mass. — Letter to Mr. Strahan. — Providence. — Belief in God.*

EARLY the next year, 1780, in a letter to Washington, Franklin showed his confidence in the happy issue of the contest for independence then going on :

"I must soon quit this scene," — he was now severely-

four—“but you may live to see our country flourish, as it will amazingly and rapidly after the war is over; like a field of young Indian corn, which long fair weather and sunshine had enfeebled and discolored, and which in that weak state, by a thunder gust of violent wind, hail, and rain, seemed to be threatened with absolute destruction; yet the storm being past, it recovers fresh verdure, shoots up with double vigor, and delights the eye, not of its owner only but of every observing traveller.”

The cause of America was strengthened this year by an alliance of several neutral powers, to inaugurate the principle, that “free ships make free goods.” This action checked the British search for contraband goods which she had freely made in the ships of every country. Other nations indeed had practiced the same rule, but as England was the maritime superior among the different powers, it had caused great annoyance to all her neighbors, and they had resolved to humble her. Franklin fully approved of this action, and instructed American cruisers to bring in no more neutral ships, “as such prizes occasion much litigation, and create ill blood.”

“I am not only,” he said, “for respecting the ships as the house of a friend, though containing the goods of an enemy, but I even wish, for the sake of humanity, that the law of nations may be further improved, by determining, that, even in time of war, all those kinds of people who are employed in procuring subsistence for the species, or in exchanging the necessaries or conveniences of life, which are for the common benefit of mankind, such as husbandmen on their lands, fishermen in their barques, and traders in unarmed vessels, shall be permitted to prosecute their sev-

eral innocent and useful employments without interruption or molestation, and nothing taken from them, even when wanted by an enemy, but on paying a fair price for the same."

In a letter to Edmund Burke, he said :

"Since the foolish part of mankind will make wars from time to time with each other, not having sense enough otherwise to settle their differences, it certainly becomes the wiser part, who cannot prevent those wars, to alleviate as much as possible the calamities attending them."

He went so far, in his abhorrence of war, as to say, that "there never was a good war, or a bad peace."

Such sentiments do honor to the head and heart that prompted them.

The multiplicity of his duties began to wear upon him, and made him anxious to be released.

"I find," he says early in 1781, "the various employments of merchant, banker, judge of admiralty, consul, etc., etc., besides my ministerial function, too multifarious and too heavy for my old shoulders; and have therefore requested Congress that I may be relieved."

Another reason may be found in the persistent attempt of certain persons in Congress to effect his recall. But in place of accepting his resignation, that body showed their entire confidence in his ability and integrity, by laying new burdens upon him, appointing him to be one of five commissioners to negotiate a treaty of peace. Writing to John Adams, one of his colleagues, he said, "I esteem it an honor to be joined with

you in so important a business ;” though at that time he had little expectation of an early cessation of hostilities. A week later, October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered, and the war was virtually ended, as to its necessary result. Negotiations for peace were conducted by the agents of the several interested powers through a period of years, ending at last, September 3, 1783, in the Treaty of Paris, by which the independence of the United States was fully acknowledged. While the treaty was pending, Dr. Franklin wrote to his friend Sir Joseph Banks :

“ Be assured, that I long earnestly for a return of those peaceful times, when I could sit down in sweet society with my English philosophical friends, communicating to each other new discoveries, and proposing improvements of old ones ; all tending to extend the power of man over matter, avert or diminish the evils he is subject to, or augment the number of his enjoyments. Much more happy should I be thus employed in your most desirable company, than in that of all the grandees of the earth projecting plans of mischief, however necessary they may be supposed for obtaining greater good. . . .

“ I join with you most perfectly in the charming wish you so well express, ‘ that such measures may be taken by both parties as may tend to the elevation of both, rather than the destruction of either.’ If anything has happened endangering one of them, my comfort is, that I endeavored earnestly to prevent it, and gave honest, faithful advice, which, if it had been regarded, would have been effectual. And still, if proper means are used to produce, not only peace, but what is much more interesting, a thorough reconciliation, a



few years may heal the wounds that have been made in our happiness, and produce a degree of prosperity of which at present we can hardly form a conception."

While Franklin was engaged in the work of the commission, and the prospect was near of established peace, and of his own return to America, he received from his grandson, master William Bache, aged ten years, the following important letter:

"DEAR GRANDPAPA:

"I embrace this opportunity of letting you know that papa is going to Passy to wait upon you home to Philadelphia. My sister is going to boarding-school to Miss Beckwith. There is a refugee row-galley brought in here. Bob says he is very glad to hear that you are in a good state of health. There are two French frigates going out to fight two British ones. I am going to Latin school to-morrow. I hope that Benny can read my letter. I see that he can write English. My sister wants some babies, some gloves, and some shoes, and a little sofa for her and her baby. Please let me know if Benny is well. . . . My mamma has wrote you a letter. My papa and mamma received Benny's picture. The people talk of peace. We had a dog named Juno, but she is lost. Carlo is alive, but Pompey is dead. We have a dog that is Juno's sister; her name is Fanny. She is papa's favorite dog, that he takes a-hunting with him. She is of the same breed as Carlo. Betsy, Louis, Deborah and myself are very well, and they send their love to you.

"I am, your most

"AFFECTIONATE GRANDCHILD."

A genuine boy's letter; and doubtless read with more satisfaction than were many of the

communications of shrewd but insincere politicians that he was compelled to pore over. It took his thoughts to the old home he longed to return to. Soon after, Mrs. Mecom wrote to him from Boston, April 29, 1783 :

“DEAR BROTHER:

“I have at length received a letter from you in your own handwriting, after a total silence of three years, in which time part of an old song would sometimes intrude itself into my mind:

“ ‘ Does he love and yet forsake me,  
For ——  
Can he forget me,  
Will he neglect me ? ’ ”

“This was but momentary; at other times I concluded it was unreasonable to expect it, and that you might with great propriety, after my teasing you so often, send me the answer that Nehemiah did to Tobias and Sanballat, who endeavored to obstruct his rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem, ‘I am doing a great work. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it to come *down* to you ? ’ ”

She then thanks him for “a great bounty,” and adds :

“I shall now be so rich that I may indulge in a small degree a propensity to help some poor creatures who have not the blessing I enjoy.”

In a letter to Thomas Brand Hollis, written about a month after the Paris Treaty, acknowledging the receipt of the Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, he speaks thus of that distinguished benefactor of Harvard College :

“America is extremely sensible of his benevolence and

great beneficence towards her, and will ever revere his memory. These volumes [of *Memoirs*] are a proof of what I have sometimes had occasion to say, in encouraging people to undertake difficult public services, that it is prodigious the quantity of good that may be done by one man, *if he will make a business of it*. It is equally surprising to think of the very little that is done by many; for, such is the general frivolity of employments and amusements of the ranks we call *gentlemen*, that every century may have seen three successions of a set of a thousand each (gentlemen, too, of equal or superior fortune,) no one of which sets, in the course of their lives, has done the good effected by this man alone! Good, not only to his own nation, and to his contemporaries, but to distant countries, and to late posterity, for such must be the effect of his multiplying and distributing copies of the works of our best English writers, on subjects the most important to the welfare of society."

At this time, animal magnetism was exciting much attention. Wonderful curative effects were claimed for it by Mesmer and his disciple Geslon, who eclipsed in popularity the most eminent physicians of the day. The world was divided into two parties, those who believed, and those who ridiculed; but the former were far the more numerous. At length, early in 1784, the King appointed a commission of ten learned men, Franklin being placed at the head, to investigate the subject. They came to the unanimous opinion, that animal magnetism was a "delusion," and that the effects ascribed to it were chiefly due to the imagination of the patients.

In a letter to his daughter, speaking of the

eagle as the national symbol of America, he said :

“I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing-hawk; and, when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him, and takes it from him. With all this injustice he is never in good case; but like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank coward; the little *kingbird*, not bigger than a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. . . .

“I am on this account, not displeased that the figure [on a medal] is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours. . . . He is, besides, (though a little vain and silly, it is true, but not the worse emblem for that,) a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards, who should presume to invade his farm yard with a *red* coat on.”

Writing, about six weeks later, March 12th, to Henry Lawrence, one of the Peace Commissioners, he says :

“I write this in great pain from the gout in both feet; but . . . . I could not let slip the opportunity, as perhaps it is the only safe one that may occur before your departure for America. I wish mine was as near. . . . I wish rather to die in my own country than here; and though the upper part of the building appears yet tolerably firm, yet be

ing undermined by the stone and gout united, its fall cannot be far distant."

The next morning he added a postscript, asking his friend to "refute" certain calumnies that had been circulated against him in America:

"You will exceedingly oblige me, who has lived beyond all other ambitions than that of dying with the fair character he has long endeavored to deserve. As to my infallibility, which you do not undertake to maintain, I am too modest myself to claim it, that is, *in general*; though when we come to *particulars*, I, like other people, give it up with difficulty. Steele says, that the difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England on that point, is only this: that the one pretends to be *infallible*, and the other to be *never in the wrong*. In this latter sense, we are most of us Church of England men, though few of us confess it, and express it so naturally and frankly, as a certain lady here who said, 'I do not know how it happens, but I meet with nobody, except myself, that is *always* in the right; *je ne trouve que moi qui a toujours raison.*'"

A week later he writes to his "dear old friend," Mrs. Hewson:

"I still exist, and still enjoy some pleasure in that existence, though now in my seventy-ninth year. Yet I feel the infirmities of age come on so fast, and the building to need so many repairs, that in a little time the owner will find it cheaper to pull it down and build a new one."

About three months later he received a most affectionate letter from his sister, Mrs. Mecom, in which, speaking of his "dreadful malady," she said:

"How many hours have I lain awake on nights thinking what excruciating pains you might then be encountering,

while I, poor, useless, and worthless worm, was permitted to be at ease. O that it was in my power to mitigate the anguish I know you endure."

If he had bitter enemies, he had also most affectionate and almost worshipful friends. There was but one exception, in his own family, and that was rather political than personal. In a letter to his son, written a few weeks after he received the above, he said :

"I am glad to find that you desire to revive the affectionate intercourse that formerly existed between us. It will be very agreeable to me; indeed, nothing has ever hurt me so much, and affected me with such keen sensations, as to find myself deserted in my old age by my only son; and not only deserted, but to find him taking up arms against me in a cause, wherein my fame, fortune, and life were all at stake. You conceived, you say, that your duty to your King and regard for your country required this.

"I ought not to blame you for differing in sentiment with me in public affairs. We are men, all subject to errors. Our opinions are not in our own power; they are formed and governed much by circumstances, that are often as inexplicable as they are irresistible. Your situation was such that few would have censured your remaining neutral, though there are natural duties which precede political ones and cannot be extinguished by them.

"This is a disagreeable subject. I drop it, and we will endeavor, as you propose, mutually to forget what has happened relating to it, as well as we can. . . .

"Wishing you health, and more happiness than it seems you have lately experienced, I remain

"YOUR AFFECTIONATE FATHER." \*

\* William Franklin removed to England, where he died, in 1813, at the age of eighty-two.

Two of his last acts before leaving France were characteristic, and honorable to him as a friend of peace and a lover of good books. The first, was forming a treaty between Prussia and the United States, one article of which condemned privateering, and declared in favor of the protection of private property in time of war; an article, says the Prussian baron who signed the treaty, "dictated by the purest zeal in favor of humanity." Of the treaty itself, Washington said that "it was the most liberal (one) which has ever been entered into between independent powers," and "perfectly original in many of its articles;" and he added, that "should its principles be considered hereafter as the basis of connexion between nations, it will operate more fully to produce a general pacification, than any measure hitherto attempted among mankind."

The other act, was founding a town library in Franklin, a new town in Massachusetts, named after him, by the donation of twenty-five pounds, for the purchase of a few good books "such as are most proper to inculcate principles of sound religion and just government;" these being "intended as the commencement of a little parochial library for the use of a society of intelligent, respectable farmers, such as our country people consist of." Among the books, suitable for such a library, he mentions one recommended by his good sister, Mrs. Mecom — Stennett's Discourse on Personal Religion.

The sentiments by which he was animated, in view of his active mission abroad and the results of war and negotiation, may be learned from a passage in a letter to Mr. Strahan, his English friend, written August 19th, 1784, in which he says :

“ You first sent small armies to subdue us, believing them more than sufficient, but soon found yourselves obliged to send greater; these, whenever they ventured to penetrate our country beyond the protection of their ships, were either repulsed and obliged to scamper out, or were surrounded, beaten, and taken prisoners. An American planter, who had never seen Europe, was chosen by us to command our troops, and continued during the war. This man sent home to you, one after another, five of your best generals, baffled, their heads bare of *laurels*, disgraced even in the opinion of their employers.”—

And adding, that the English had despised the “ understandings ” as well as the “ courage ” of the Americans, he concludes as follows :

“ But after all, my dear friend, do not imagine that I am vain enough to ascribe our success to any superiority in any of those points. I am too well acquainted with all the springs and levers of our machine, not to see that our human means were unequal to our undertaking, and that if it had not been for the justice of our cause, and the consequent interposition of Providence, in which we had faith, we must have been ruined. If I had ever before been an atheist, I should now have been convinced of the being and government of a Deity ! It is he who abases the proud and favors the humble. May we never forget his goodness to us, and may our future conduct manifest our gratitude.”



The next April, in 1785, he said :

"I have received from Congress my leave to return . .  
. . I shall now be free from politics for the rest of my  
life. Welcome again, my dear philosophical amusements!"

Alas, it was still to be politics and not philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

*A Successor Appointed.—Thomas Jefferson.—Letter to David Hartley.—“Going to Bed.”—Leaves Passy.—Sails from Havre.—At Southampton.—The Bishop of Asaph.—Meets his Son.—Welcomed Home.—The Gulf Stream.—Smoky Chimneys.—Regrets on his Leaving France.—Philosophical Society.—Other Public Bodies.—Congratulatory Letters.—President of Pennsylvania.—Letters from Mrs. Mecom.—Happy in his Family.—Letters.—Views of Death.—Large Correspondence.—To Mrs. Hewson.—His Amusements.—To Mrs. Mecom.—Bad Spelling.—Phonography.—The Servant Girl.—Anniversary of Independence in Philadelphia.—Letter from Mrs. Mecom.—Blackberry Jelly.—The North Church Lightning-Rod.—Another Letter.—Barrel of Flour.—Great Snow Storm.—Letter to a Friend in England.—A Future State.*

HIS resignation having at length been accepted by Congress, and a successor, Thomas Jefferson, been appointed minister plenipotentiary, on the 10th of March, Franklin was at liberty to return. He did not leave, however, for several months. A week before his departure, writing

to David Hartley, he said: "I leave you still in the field, but, having finished my day's task, I am going home *to go to bed*. Wish me a good night's rest, as I do you a pleasant evening. Adieu!" On the 12th of July, 1785, after a residence of about eight years and a half in France, he left Passy, traveling by easy stages to Havre, in one of the Queen's litters carried by two Spanish mules, the muleteer riding another, and his two grandsons accompanying in a carriage. On the 18th, "they reached Havre, having received many attentions at every place where they stopped on the journey." On the 22nd, they left Havre for Southampton, which they reached on the 24th, where he was met by Bishop Shipley and his family, and other old friends. Here also he found his son William, from whom he had been separated for nine years, and who was now residing in England. On the 27th, the party left Southampton, arriving at Philadelphia, after a pleasant voyage, on the 14th of September.

"My son-in-law," says Franklin, "came with a boat for us; we landed at Market Street wharf, where we were received by a crowd of people with huzzas, and accompanied with acclamations quite to my door. Found my family well. God be praised and thanked for all his mercies!"

During the voyage, he repeated his experiments in the Gulf Stream, and also prepared two valuable papers, on Improvements in Navigation, and Smoky Chimneys, which he afterwards read before the Philosophical Society.

He left France with the regrets of all classes "When he bid farewell to Passy, it seemed as if the village had lost its patriarch," so much had he endeared himself to his neighbors during a several years' residence among them. The veneration and affection awakened toward him in France were strikingly manifested, a few years later, when, on his death, the National Assembly and the community of Paris sent letters of condolence to the President of the United States and to Congress; "The first instance," says Jefferson, "of that homage having been paid by a public body of one nation to a private citizen of another."

It was a high compliment paid him by Jefferson, when he said, that "the succession to Dr. Franklin at the court of France was an excellent school of humility. On being presented to any one as the minister of America, the commonplace question used in such cases was, 'It is you, sir, who replace Dr. Franklin?' I generally answered, 'No one can replace him, sir; I am only his successor.'"

At home he received a universal welcome, such as was due to his personal worth and his great public services. From General Washington, Mr. Jay, and numerous other distinguished men in all parts of the country, came letters of congratulation. The next day after his arrival, the Assembly of Pennsylvania presented him a congratulatory address, and the American Philosophical Society, the University of Phila-

delphia, and other public bodies, followed in the same strain of respect and welcome. A few days after his return, he was chosen a member of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. The next month, the veteran statesman of seventy-nine, having already spent more than half a century in the public service, was elected President (or Governor) of the State of Pennsylvania, in which office he was continued for the two following years, as long as the Constitution made him eligible. But no congratulation, we presume, was more hearty or welcome than that of his sister, Mrs. Mecom. About a week after his arrival, she wrote :

"Blessed be God, who has brought my dear brother safe to his desired port; that has answered my daily prayers for his comfort and ease; that you have had so good a passage, and but one day's illness from the malady that attends you."

Dr. Franklin was now peculiarly happy in his home.

"I am got into my *niche*," he wrote to a friend, "after being kept out of it twenty-four years by foreign employments. It is a very good house, that I built so long ago to retire into, without being able to enjoy it."

And to another :

"I am now in the bosom of my family, and find four new little prattlers, who cling about the knees of their grandpapa, and afford me great pleasure. The affectionate welcome I met with from my fellow-citizens was far beyond my expectations."

To yet another friend, he wrote :

"I am surrounded by my offspring, a dutiful and affec-

tionate daughter in my house, with six grandchildren, the eldest of whom is now at college in the next street, finishing the learned part of his education; the others promising, both for parts and good dispositions. What their conduct may be, when they grow up and enter the important scenes of life, I shall not live to *see*, and I cannot *foresee*. I therefore enjoy among them the present hour, and leave the future to Providence.

“He that raises a large family does, indeed, while he lives to observe them, *stand*, as Watts says, a *broad mark for sorrow*; but then he stands a broader mark for pleasure too. When we launch our little fleet of barks into the ocean, bound to different ports, we hope for each a prosperous voyage; but contrary winds, hidden shoals, storms, and enemies come in for a share in the disposition of events; and though these occasion a mixture of disappointment, yet, considering the risk where we can make no insurance, we should think ourselves happy if some return with success. My son’s son, Temple Franklin, . . . has dropped for the present his views of acting in the political line, and applies himself ardently to the study and practice of agriculture. This is much more agreeable to me, who esteem it the most useful, the most independent, and therefore the noblest, of employments. . . .

“My health and spirits continue, thanks to God, as when you saw me. The only complaint I then had, does not grow worse, and is tolerable. I still have enjoyment in the company of my friends; and, being easy in circumstances, have many reasons to like living. But the course of nature must soon put a period to my present mode of existence. This I shall submit to with the less regret, as, having seen during a long life a good deal of this world, I feel a growing curiosity to be acquainted with some other; and can cheerfully, with filial confidence, resign my spirit to the conduct of that great and good Parent of mankind, who created it, and who

has so graciously protected and prospered me from my birth to the present hour."

He kept up a large correspondence with friends at home and abroad. To Mrs. Hewson, after acknowledging the receipt of her letters, he wrote :

"Therein I find all the pleasing little family history of your children; how Willie had begun to spell, overcoming by strength of memory all the difficulty occasioned by the common wretched alphabet, while you were convinced of the utility of our new one;\* how Tom, genius-like, struck out new paths, and, relinquishing the old names of the letters, called U *bell*, and P *bottle*; how Eliza began to grow jolly, that is, fat and handsome, resembling Aunt Rooke, whom I used to call *my lovely* . . . .

"I have found my family here in health, good circumstances, and well respected by their fellow citizens. The companions of my youth are indeed almost all departed; but I find an agreeable society among their children and grandchildren. I have public business to preserve me from *ennui*, and private amusement besides, in conversation, books, my garden, and cribbage. Considering our well-furnished, plentiful market as the best of gardens, I am turning mine, in the midst of which my house stands, into grass plots and gravel walks, with trees and flowering shrubs. Cards we sometimes play here, in long winter evenings, but it is as they play at chess, not for money but for honor, or the pleasure of beating one another. This will not be quite a novelty to you, as you may remember we played together in that manner during the winter at Passy. I have, indeed, now and then, a little compunction in reflecting that I spend time so idly; but another reflection comes to relieve me, whispering,

\* Invented by Dr. Franklin, on the principle of phonography.

'You know that the soul is immortal; why, then, should you be such a niggard of a little time, when you have a whole eternity before you?' So, being easily convinced, and, like other reasonable creatures, satisfied with a small reason, when it is in favor of doing what I have a mind to, I shuffle the cards again, and begin another game.

"As to public amusements, we have neither plays nor operas, but we had yesterday a kind of oratorio, as you will see by the enclosed paper; and we have assemblies, balls, and concerts, besides little parties at one another's houses, in which there is sometimes dancing, and frequently good music; so that we jog on in life as pleasantly as you do in England; anywhere but in London, for there you have plays performed by good actors. That, however, is, I think, the only advantage London has over Philadelphia."

On the Fourth of July, 1786, he wrote to his sister :

"You need not be concerned, in writing to me, about your bad spelling; for, in my opinion, as our alphabet now stands, the bad spelling, or what is called so, is generally the best, as conforming to the sound of the letters, and of the words. To give you an instance. A gentleman received a letter, in which were these words: *Not finding Brown at home, I delivered your messeg to his yf*. The gentleman, finding it bad spelling, and therefore not very intelligible, called his lady to help him read it. Between them they picked out the meaning of all but the *yf*, which they could not understand. The lady proposed calling her chambermaid, because Betty, says she, has the best knack at reading bad spelling of any one I know. Betty came, and was surprised that neither Sir nor Madam could tell what *yf* was. 'Why,' said she, '*yf* spells *wife*; what else can it spell?' And, indeed, it is a much better, as well as shorter method of spell-



ing wife, than *doubleyou, t, ef, e*, which in reality spells *doubletsey*.

"There is much rejoicing in town to-day, it being the Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, which we signed this day ten years, and thereby hazarded lives and fortunes. God was pleased to put a favorable end to the contest, much sooner than we had reason to expect. His name be praised."

From her, about a fortnight after, came a letter, informing her brother of the public celebration of the opening of the new bridge on Charles River; "it was thought" she said "the toll-gatherers received yesterday, being Commencement day, five hundred dollars." She added, that she had sent "the soap." Again in August, the good sister wrote, that she hoped there might be efficacy in blackberry jelly to help her brother. She added, with a burst of pious gratitude:

"Oh, if it is, how shall I enough bless that merciful, compassionate Being, who has directed to such a medicine for your relief."

She informed him also that,

"The North Church folks are repairing their steeple, and it was thought the electrical wire was too small to conduct a large stroke of lightning. I felt uneasy about it, and got Mr. Collas to inquire about it, and he tells me they have made it three times as big as it was before."

In December she thanked him for "a charming barrel of flour," which he had sent her, and gave him some particulars of a great snow-storm in Boston;

"The snow has been so deep, and we no man in the

house, that we might have been buried alive were it not for the care of some good neighbors who began to dig us out before we were up in the morning, and Cousin William came puffing and sweating, as soon as it was possible, to see how we were, and if we wanted anything; but, thank God, we had no want of anything necessary, if we had been shut up a fortnight, except milk."

Early the next year, 1787, he wrote to a friend in England :

"I often think with great pleasure on the happy days I passed in England with my and your learned and ingenious friends, who have left us to join the majority in the world of spirits. Every one of them now knows more than all of us they have left behind. It is to me a comfortable reflection, that, since we must live forever in a future state, there is a sufficient stock of amusement in reserve for us, to be found in constantly learning something new to eternity, the present quantity of human ignorance infinitely exceeding that of human knowledge.

"B. FRANKLIN (in his eighty-second year)."

To a friend in France he wrote, not long after :

"Sitting or lying in bed, I am generally quite easy, God be thanked; and, as I live temperately, drink no wine, and use daily the exercise of the dumb-bell, I flatter myself that the stone is kept from augmenting so much as it might otherwise do, and that I may still continue to find it tolerable. People who live long, who will drink of the cup of life to the very bottom, must expect to meet with some of the usual dregs, and when I reflect on the number of terrible maladies human nature is subject to, I think myself favored in having to my share only the stone and the gout."

Speaking of "the prejudice in Europe, which supposes a

family dishonored by the punishment of one of its members, as very absurd," he adds, "on the contrary," as his opinion, "that a rogue hanged out of a family does it more honor than ten that live in it."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

*“Plunged into Public Business.”—Member of the Convention that Framed the Constitution.—Major Forman.—Washington.—Franklin.—Speech on Prayers in the Convention.—Divine Providence.—Contest between the Larger and Smaller States.—Ineligibility of the President to a Second Term.—Power of the President.—James Madison.—Anecdote of Franklin.—Picture of a Rising Sun.—Franklin’s Activity.—Bigelow.—Diary of Manasseh Cutler.—His Visit to Franklin in 1787.—Letter to Mrs. Mecom.—How to Build Fire-proof Houses.—His Kindness.—Letter from Mrs. Mecom.—Letter from his Niece.—What is Known in Heaven of Earthly Things.—Letter to his Sister.—Letter to a Friend.—Relief from Public Business.—Meetings of Societies at his House.—His Domestic Life.—Remedy for Deafness.—Abolition of Slavery.—“Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks.”—Abolition Memorial to Congress.—Last Sickness.—His Cheerfulness.—Relates Anecdotes.—His Sickness Increases.—His Patience.—Gratitude to God.—His Death.—Dr. Jones.—Dr. Rush.—Mrs. Ewson’s Account of his*

*Sickness and Death.—Dr. Watts' Poems.—His Religious Views. — Letter to Thomas Paine.*

WRITING to a friend, after his return to America, Dr. Franklin said: "I am plunged again into public business as deep as ever."

"I had, on my return," he wrote to another friend in England, "some right to expect repose; and it was my intention to avoid all public business. But I had not firmness enough to resist the unanimous desire of my country folks; and I find myself harnessed again in their service for another year. They engrossed the prime of my life. They have eaten my flesh, and seem resolved now to pick my bones."

This had immediate reference to his appointment as President of Pennsylvania. But yet more responsible duties now awaited him. He was elected a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States; the Articles of Confederation, under which the republic had been organized, having been found ill-adapted to a firm and stable government. The Convention met in May, 1787, at Philadelphia. Major Forman, who died in 1862, at the age of ninety-seven, thus describes the appearance of two of its most distinguished members. He says that,

"He saw General Washington at Philadelphia, in the Convention which assembled to adopt the United States Constitution. The general was attired in citizen's dress, blue coat, cocked hat, his hair in a cue, and crossed and powdered. He walked alone, and seemed borne down in thought. He presided over the Convention, which was held in the State House. A few moments previous to General Wash

ington's taking his seat on the rostrum, the venerable Dr. Franklin was brought forward by a posse of men, in his sedan, and helped into the hall, he being severely afflicted with the palsy." \*

He was one of the most valuable and influential members of that august body. One speech of his is memorable, as showing his faith in the value of prayer. Many weeks had been spent in fruitless and acrimonious debate, when Franklin introduced a motion for daily prayers, in the following words:

"The small progress we have made after four or five weeks, close attendance and continued reasoning with each other; our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing almost as many noes as ayes,—is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding. We, indeed, seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for modes of government, and examined the different forms of those republics which, having been formed with the seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist. And we have viewed modern states all round Europe, but find none of their constitutions suitable to our circumstances. In this situation of this assembly, groping, as it were, in the dark, to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of applying to the Father of lights, to illuminate our understanding? In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously an-

\* Mrs. Bonney's Leg. of Historical Gleanings. II., 366.

answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth — *that God governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that “except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded; and we ourselves shall become a reproach and byword down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing governments by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war and conquest.

I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.”

He showed his remarkable genius for statesmanship in the way he brought to a satisfactory end the bitter contest between the larger and smaller States, by proposing that all the States should be equally represented in the Senate, and according to their population in the lower

House, where also money bills were to originate. He opposed a property qualification for Representatives to Congress, and the allowing a compensation to members of the Senate. He favored the election of President for a term of seven years, and his subsequent ineligibility.

He expressed his fears of the result of giving to the President the power of appointments to office; and favored the clause which grants to Congress the power of impeaching him. He always feared the danger of Executive encroachments upon the liberties of the people.

Madison relates that, —

“Whilst the last members were signing the Federal Constitution, Doctor Franklin, looking towards the President’s chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed to a few members near him, that painters had found it difficult to distinguish, in their art, a rising from a setting sun. ‘I have,’ said he, ‘often and often, in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun.’”

During the session of four months, Franklin, though now in his eighty-second year, gave to its work five hours every day.

“It is not too much to say,” says Bigelow, “that to Franklin, perhaps more than to any other one man, the present Constitution of the United States owes most of those features which have given it durability, and have made it the ideal by which all other systems of government are tested by Americans.”



Fortunately, the diary\* of Rev. Manasseh Cutler of Hamilton, Mass., somewhat eminent in his day as a scholar and a botanist, gives us a picture of Franklin at this period of his life. Being on a visit at Philadelphia, he called upon the venerable statesman.

"July 13, 1787.—Dr. Franklin lives in Market Street. His house stands up a court, at some distance from the street. I found him in his garden, sitting upon a grass-plot, under a very large mulberry-tree, with several other gentlemen, and two or three ladies. When Mr. Gerry introduced me, he rose from his chair, took me by the hand, expressed his joy at seeing me, welcomed me to the city, and begged me to seat myself close to him. His voice was low, but his countenance open, frank, and pleasing. I delivered to him my letters. After he had read them, he took me again by the hand, and, with the usual compliments, introduced me to the other gentlemen, who are most of them members of the Convention.

"Here we entered into a free conversation, and spent our time most agreeably, until it was quite dark. The tea-table was spread under the tree, and Mrs. Bache, who is the only daughter of the Doctor, and lives with him, served it out to the company. She had three of her children about her. They seemed to be extremely fond of their grandpapa. The Doctor showed me a curiosity he had just received, and with which he was extremely pleased. It was a snake with two heads, preserved in a large phial. . . . He grounds his opinion of its not being an extraordinary production, but a distinct genus, on the perfect form of the snake, the probability of its being of some age, and there having been found a snake entirely similar (of which the doctor has a drawing, which he showed us), near Lake Champlain, in the time of

\* Sparks, Vol. I., 529.

the late war. He mentioned the situation of this snake, if it was travelling among bushes, and one head should choose to go on one side of the stem of a bush, and the other head should prefer the other side, and neither of the heads would consent to come back, or give way to the other. He was then going to mention a humorous matter, that had that day occurred in the Convention, in consequence of his comparing the snake to America; for he seemed to forget that everything in the Convention was to be kept a profound secret. But the secrecy of Convention matters was suggested to him, which stopped him, and deprived me of the story he was going to tell.

“After it was dark we went into the house, and he invited me into his library, which is likewise his study. It is a very large chamber, and high-studded. The walls are covered with book-shelves, filled with books; besides these there are four large alcoves, extending two-thirds the length of the chamber, filled in the same manner. I presume this is the largest and by far the best private library in America. He showed us a glass machine for exhibiting the circulation of the blood in the arteries and veins of the human body. .

. . . Another great curiosity was a rolling-press, for taking the copies of letters or any other writing. A sheet of paper is completely copied in less than two minutes. . .

It is an invention of his own. . . . He also showed us his long, artificial arm and hand, for taking down and putting up books on high shelves, which are out of reach; and his great arm-chair, with rockers, and a large fan placed over it, with which he fans himself, keeps off the flies, etc., while he sits reading, with only a small motion of the foot; and many other curiosities and inventions, all his own, but of lesser note. Over his mantel he has a prodigious number of medals, busts, and casts in wax, or plaster of Paris,

which are the effigies of the most noted characters in Europe.

"But what the Doctor wished principally to show me was a huge volume on botany. . . . It was a single volume, but so large, that it was with great difficulty that he was able to raise it from a low shelf, and lift it on the table. But with that senile ambition, which is common to old people, he insisted on doing it himself, merely to show us how much strength he had remaining. It contained the whole of Linnaeus' *Systema Vegetabilium*, with large cuts of every plant, colored from nature. It was a feast to me, and the Doctor seemed to enjoy it as well as myself. We spent a couple of hours in examining this volume, while the other gentlemen amused themselves with other matters. . . .

"He seemed extremely fond, through the course of the visit, of dwelling on philosophical subjects, and particularly that of Natural History; while the other gentlemen were swallowed up with politics. This was a favorable circumstance to me; for almost the whole of his conversation was addressed to me, and I was highly delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties, notwithstanding his age.

"His manners are perfectly easy, and everything about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humor, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seemed as natural and involuntary as his breathing."

His kindness and his philosophy appear in one of his letters to his sister, written about two months later, in which he says :

"I lament the loss your town has suffered this year by fire. I sometimes think men do not act like reasonable creatures, when they build for themselves combustible dwellings, in

which they are every day obliged to use fire. In my new buildings, I have taken a few precautions not generally used; to wit, none of the wooden work of one room communicates with the wooden work of any other room, and all the floors, and even the steps of the stairs, are plastered close to the boards, besides the plastering on the laths under the joists. There are also trap-doors to go out upon the roofs, that one may go out and wet the shingles in case of a neighboring fire. But, indeed, I think the stair-cases should be stone, and the floors tiled as in Paris, and the roofs either tiled or slated.

"I sent you lately a barrel of flour, and I blame myself for not sooner desiring you to lay in your winter's wood, and drawing upon me for it as last year. To avoid such neglect in future, I now make the direction general, that you draw on me every year for the same purpose."

Again in November he writes :

"I am glad you have made the provision against the winter, which I mentioned to you. Your bill is honored. It is impossible for me always to guess what you may want, and I hope, therefore, that you will never be shy in letting me know wherein I can help to make your life more comfortable."

In a letter from his sister, written about two months later, she alludes to his suspecting that she had not fully told her need :

"I do indeed live comfortable. I have a good, clean house to live in, etc. I go to bed early, lie warm and comfortable, rise early to a good fire, have my breakfast directly, and eat it with a good appetite, and then read, or work, or what else I please. We live frugally, bake all our own bread, brew small beer, lay in a little cider, pork, butter, etc., supply ourselves with other provisions daily at the

door. We make no entertainments, but sometimes an intimate acquaintance will come in and partake with us the dinner we have provided for ourselves, and a dish of tea in the afternoon; and if a friend sits and chats a little in the evening, we eat our hasty-pudding (our common supper) after they are gone.

"It is true I have some troubles, but my dear brother does all in his power to alleviate them by preventing even a wish."

The familiar terms which he maintained with his relatives, appear in many letters that passed between them. Thus his niece, Mrs. Collas, of Boston, writing to him, July, of this year, and referring to something said in previous letters, remarked :

"Mamma . . . said you did not consider that in heaven we should know everything, for a good woman of her acquaintance who was just a-going, longed to hear from England first, that she might carry the news of the Stamp Act's being repealed to her father, who was a good old Whig. I asked her if she thought they would hear when Maulding [Malden] bridge was finished: that, she thought, was too trifling; so we concluded, upon the whole, that there would be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repented, than over ninety and nine *such things*."

Writing in November, to his sister, he says;

"I am sorry you should suffer so much uneasiness with tears and apprehensions about my health. There are in life real evils enough, and it is a folly to afflict ourselves with imaginary ones; and it is time enough when the real ones arrive. I see by the papers that to-morrow (November 27th) is your Thanksgiving Day. The flour will arrive too late for your plum-puddings, for I find it went from hence but a few

days since. I hope, however, it will be with you before the winter shuts up the harbor."

He writes to a friend early the next year (1789) :

"Having served my time of three years as President, I have now renounced all public business, and enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*. My friends indulge me with their frequent visits, which I have now leisure to receive and enjoy. The Philosophical Society, and the Society for Political Inquiries, meet at my house, which I have enlarged by additional building, that affords me a large room for those meetings, and another over it for my library, now very considerable; and over all some lodging-rooms. I have seven promising grandchildren by my daughter, who play with and amuse me, and she is a kind and attentive nurse to me when I am at any time indisposed; so that I pass my time as agreeably as at my age a man may well expect, and have little to wish for, except a more easy exit than my malady seems to threaten."

He still has some practical information to give to his friend, and adds :

"The deafness you complain of gives me concern. If moderate, you may remedy it easily and readily, by putting your thumb and fingers behind your ear, pressing it outwards, and enlarging it, as it were, with the hollow of your hand. By an exact experiment, I found that I could hear the tick of a watch at forty-five feet distance by this means, which was barely audible at twenty feet without it. The experiment was made at midnight when the house was still."

He was much interested in the abolition of slavery, and in 1787 was chosen President of the first society ever formed for that purpose the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, whose cen-

ennial anniversary was celebrated in Philadelphia the past year (1875). He drew up a Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks; and in 1790, about two months before his death and as his last public act, he signed, as President of the Abolition Society, a memorial to Congress, which he is said to have written, for the abolition of American slavery. In it he said:

“That mankind are all formed by the same Almighty Being, alike objects of his care and equally designed for the enjoyment of happiness, the Christian religion teaches us to believe, and the political creed of Americans fully coincides with that position.”

Still later, less than a month before his death, he wrote a travesty of a speech made by a member of Congress, in which he represented an Algerine as urging, before the Divan, reasons in favor of European slavery, similar to those presented by the Americans in behalf of negro slavery.

But the life that had so long been busy in works of utility and benevolence, in promoting the cause of freedom, science, and humanity, was drawing to a close. Early in April, 1790, he was attacked with “a fever and complaint of the breast,” which confined him most of the time to his bed. In the intervals of pain, which was very great,

“He not only amused himself by reading and conversing cheerfully with his family and a few friends, who visited him, but was often employed in doing business of a public

as well as of a private nature, with various persons who waited upon him for that purpose; and, in every instance, displayed not only the readiness and disposition to do good, which were the distinguishing characteristics of his life, but the fullest and clearest possession of his uncommon abilities. He also not unfrequently indulged in those *jeux d'esprit* and entertaining anecdotes, which were the delight of all who heard him.

"About sixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish disposition, without any particular symptoms attending it till the third or fourth day, when he complained of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became extremely acute, attended by a cough and laborious breathing. During this state, when the severity of his pains drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe, that he was afraid he did not bear them as he ought; acknowledging his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men, and made no doubt but that his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind he continued until five days before his death, when the pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery." But a change came over him, and, "on the 17th of April, 1790, about eleven o'clock at night, he quietly expired, closing a long and useful life of eighty-four years and three months."\*

Dr. Rush says that

"His conversation with his family, upon the subject of his dissolution, was free and cheerful. A few days before

\*From an account of his sickness and death, by Dr. Jones, his attending physician. Sparks.



he died, he rose from his bed, and begged that it might be made up for him, so that he *might die in a decent manner*. His daughter told him that she hoped he would recover, and live many years longer. He calmly replied, '*I hope not.*' Upon being advised to change his position in bed, that he might breathe *easy*, he said, '*A dying man can do nothing easy.*'"

Mrs. Hewson, who had removed to Philadelphia, wrote to a friend :

"I was the faithful witness of the closing scene, which he sustained with that calm fortitude which characterized him through life. No repining, no peevish expression, ever escaped him during a confinement of two years, in which, I believe, if every moment of care could be added together, the sum would not amount to two whole months. When the pain was not too violent to be amused, he employed himself with his books, his pen, or in conversation with his friends; and upon every occasion displayed the clearness of his intellect and the cheerfulness of his temper. Even when the intervals of pain were so short that his words were frequently interrupted, I have known him to hold a discourse in a sublime strain of piety. . . .

"I shall never forget one day that I passed with our friend last summer. I found him in bed in great agony; but, when that agony abated a little, I asked him if I should read to him. He said, Yes, and the first book I met with was Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. I read the *Life of Watts*, who was a favorite author with Dr. Franklin; and instead of lulling him to sleep, it roused him to a display of the power of his memory and his reason. He repeated several of Watts' *Lyric Poems*, and descanted upon their sublimity in a strain worthy of them and of their pious author.

"It is natural for us to wish that an attention to some ceremonies had accompanied that religion of the heart,

which I am convinced Dr. Franklin always possessed; but let us, who feel the benefit of them, continue to practice them without thinking lightly of that piety, which could support pain without a murmur and meet death without terror."

The religious views of Dr. Franklin underwent important changes during the course of his life. When but a lad he became a doubter of revelation and a deist.

"My arguments," he afterwards said, "perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph; but each of these having wronged me greatly, without the least compunction, and recollecting Keith's conduct toward me, (who was another freethinker,) and my own towards Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble; I began to suspect that this doctrine, though it might be true, was not very useful."

But he says :

"I never doubted the existence of a Deity; that he made the world and governed it by his providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; that our souls are immortal; and that all crimes will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter."

That he believed in prayer, appears from the forms of prayer which he drew up for his own use, and especially from his solemn appeal to the Convention which formed the Constitution, to invite clergymen of the city to open the discussions of that body with prayer for divine guidance.

The famous letter which he wrote to an infidel, supposed to be Thomas Paine, urging the

suppression of a work impugning the doctrines of revelation, shows the results of his matured convictions:

“I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundation of all religion. For without the belief of a Providence, that takes cognizance of, guards, and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his displeasure, or to pray for his protection. I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present, I shall only give you my opinion, that, though your reasonings are subtle, and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject, and the consequence of printing this piece, will be a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits against the wind, spits in his own face.

“But, were you to succeed, do you imagine any good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to lead a virtuous life, without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes *habitual*, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is, to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might

easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots, that a youth, to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother.

"I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person: whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a great deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked *with religion*, what would they be *if without it*? I intend this letter itself as a *proof* of my friendship, and therefore add no *professions* to it; but subscribe simply

"Yours,

B. FRANKLIN."







